

CHILDREN'S RESPONSES TO READ-ALOUDS AND GROUP-SHARED WRITING
IN A MULTI-ETHNIC, MULTI-AGE PRIMARY GRADE CLASSROOM

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

1998

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible if not for the support and encouragement of many kind, thoughtful individuals along the way. I have been blessed with many strong and intelligent mentors at the University of Florida, supportive teachers and students in public schools, and a simply remarkable family.

First, I must thank Dr. Linda Lamme for her faith in me during the last seven years. It was she who inspired me to return to graduate school full time and shared my passion for studying issues of literacy, power, and equity in schools. She has always taught me to follow my instincts. Without her constant support, I would have doubted myself many times, and I owe my own perseverance to her guidance and insightfulness. She has been a friend and an incredible teacher, and I see her influence in the pages of this study as I do all my work.

Dr. Rod Webb taught me what is possibly the most valuable lesson I could have learned as a researcher and as a human being--how to make the familiar strange. Because of his gentle guidance and attention to rigor, I now live the life of an ethnographer. He represents the model of the researcher and teacher I would like to become. Without his mentorship, I probably would never have found the courage to ask my *own* questions.

My other committee members have given me so very much. Dr. Ben Nelms exhibits a contagious love of literature and the study of response. He has prompted my thinking many times as he pushed me to consider my stance on a range of

educational issues. Dr. Danling Fu brought me aboard the original study that sparked my interest in this dissertation topic. Dr. Fu helped me learn to feel like a professional, and she modeled for me the balance needed in a researcher's life. Dr. Jane Townsend taught me to trust my hunches and to remain curious--even when answers might initially appear simple. From Dr. Townsend I have also learned to marvel at the remarkable linguistic achievements of children. Each of these three professors has been instrumental in preparing me for the challenge of this dissertation.

I remain most grateful to the teacher I call "Mrs. Smith." Mrs. Smith welcomed me into her classroom and embraced me as a friend. She is truly a teacher researcher, and I find her amazing to watch with children. As I read this study, I see many of her wonderings between the lines, which is no surprise to me since she was so generous with her curiosities. The classroom is a private domain for many teachers, and I respect her for allowing me to "live" in her classroom world for a year. I learned many lessons from her.

The children who participated in this study taught me, each day, how important it is to continue questioning our practices and examining our own taken-for-granted understandings. Their enthusiasm for this project and for working with me has warmed my heart many times. I will always appreciate how they invited a grown woman join in their lunch conversations, playtime escapades, and private conversations. Their parents, who asked nothing in return for their participation, have offered me insights I never could have acquired otherwise.

My own parents offered unconditional support for my graduate studies and for this dissertation. When I grew weary, they gave me a boost with words of confidence and assurance. They also provided the child care that kept me from having to choose

whether to be a good mother or a good graduate student. Finally, they fostered my identity as a researcher. I owe them everything.

Finally, I thank my husband, Ron, and our daughter, Alison. My family offered me the time and space for my work on this study, even when such offerings took a toll on my productivity as wife and mother. They supported my enthusiasm for my 'other life' as a researcher and have agreed to live with the consequences of my choice of an academic career. Ron and Alison also gave many well-timed doses of pure joy to get me through the challenging schedule balancing, the late nights of writing, and the frustrations of not knowing all the answers. They make life worth living.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT	x
 CHAPTERS	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Nature of the Problem	1
Purpose of the Study	4
Theoretical Perspective	7
Reader Response Theory in Historical Perspective	7
Transaction and the Construction of Meaning as Culturally Influenced	11
Research Questions	17
2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	22
Children's Responses to Literature: Methodologies, Foci, and Findings	22
Culture and Reader Response	28
Writing Workshop and Group-Shared Writing	35
Critical Theory and Multicultural Education	39
Definitions of Multicultural Education	39
History and Origins of Multicultural Education	43
Defining Multicultural Education as Critical Pedagogy	45
Issues and Concerns about Multicultural Education	47
Summary	50
3 METHOD	52
Qualitative Research	52
Methods of Ethnography	54
Case Study	55
Methods to Collect Data on Children's Responses	58

	Methods to Collect Data on Ethnic Identification and Cultural Background	60
	Collecting Data on the Classroom Interpretive Community	63
	Setting	64
	Selection of the Site	64
	Description of the Site	66
	Participants	67
	Gaining Access	69
	Procedure	71
	Data Collection	72
	Role	79
	Researcher Bias	81
	Researcher Qualifications	83
	Analysis	84
4	STUDY CONTEXT: A DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL, TEACHER, AND STUDENTS	88
	Pine Elementary and the Friendship Program Classes.....	88
	Mrs. Smith's Class	91
	The Teacher and Intern	91
	The Student Participants	93
	Life in Mrs. Smith's Class	100
	Summary	104
5	CLASSROOM COMMUNITIES FOR RESPONSE	106
	Peer Relationships	106
	Play and Seating Patterns	107
	Exclusionary Practices	109
	Ethnic Differences Between Students	116
	Tempers and Aggressive Behavior	118
	Dancing and Rhythmic Movement	120
	Taking Things/ Ownership	121
	Evidence of Outside-of-School Experiences	124
	Summary	126
	Children's Responses in the Classroom	127
	Norms for Participation	127
	Two Types of Response	132
	Summary	142

6	PRECIOUS' RESPONSES TO READ-ALOUDS AND GROUP-SHARED WRITING	143
	Introduction	143
	Background	143
	Written Response	151
	Patterns of Written Response in the Class	151
	Precious' Connections with Class Patterns	154
	Response in Read-Alouds and Group-Shared Writing Times.....	158
	Initiating Readings	159
	Oral Responses	161
	Movement	167
	Sharing Books	167
	Reading Time Behaviors Not Observably Related to Literature or Classmates' Writing.....	169
	Summary	172
7	LEON'S RESPONSES TO READ-ALOUDS AND GROUP-SHARED WRITING.....	174
	Introduction.....	174
	Background	174
	Written Response	180
	Response in Read-Aloud and Group-Shared Writing Times.....	183
	Oral Response	183
	Other Reading-Time Behaviors	191
	Summary	192
8	A LOOK AT THE CLASS: RESPONSE DURING READ-ALOUDS AND GROUP-SHARED WRITING.....	193
	Introduction.....	193
	Response	195
	Movement	195
	Calling Out	196
	Touching Books	198
	Writing Based on Stories	200
	Verbal Response to Illustrations	204
	Orally Trying to Make Sense of Story	205
	Observations on Text--Letters and Words	207
	Initiating and Abandoning Readings	207
	Discussion	209
	Read-Alouds of Literature and Group-Shared Writing	212
	Settings for Read-Alouds and Group-Shared Writing.....	212

	Similarities Between Group-Shares and Read-Alouds	213
	Differences Between Group-Shares and Read-Alouds.....	217
	Comparisons of Three Typical Read-Alouds with	
	One Differently-Structured Read-Aloud	225
	Typical Read-Alouds	226
	Differently-Structured Read-Alouds	233
	African American Children's Reactions to Stories with	
	African American Characters	240
	Summary	243
9	SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION.....	245
	Summary of the Results	247
	Discussion	252
	Social Response Theory.....	255
	Multicultural, Critical Perspectives	258
	Limitations and Directions for Future Research	260
	Implications	262
APPENDICES		
A	BOOKS READ TO THE CLASS	263
B	INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENT INTERVIEWS	265
	REFERENCES	267
	BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	289

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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WRITING IN A MULTI-ETHNIC, MULTI-AGE
PRIMARY GRADE CLASSROOM

By

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December 1998

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Major Department: Instruction and Curriculum

The purpose of this five month, naturalistic study was to describe possible relationships between children's ethnicities and their responses to read-alouds and group-shared writing within one multi-age, primary grade classroom. Qualitative methods, including participant observations, interviews, document collection, and research journaling, were used to aid in answering the following research questions. (1) In one multi-age classroom, what are the possible relationships between a child's ethnic identity and his or her (mediated, observable) responses to stories read aloud by the teacher and to classmates' group-shared writing? (2) What might be the relationships(s) between children's responses and the nature of the ethnically diverse interpretive community in which the reading takes place? I specifically wanted to focus on response in the natural classroom setting; ethnic identities were described qualitatively rather than measured. Twenty students, including five African American focus-study children, participated in this research.

Few differences were found in the content of students' responses; all students stepped into stories, made intertextual connections, engaged in analysis, and voiced personal connections with stories. However, the modes of response most frequently used by African American students in this class (i.e., calling out and movement) were generally invalidated by the teachers. Children had only limited opportunities to engage in aesthetic response because the read-aloud and group-shared writing participant structures followed an initiate-response-evaluation pattern situated by the teachers' efferent stance toward the readings. Response was related to the social, ethnically influenced hierarchies within classroom peer groups. Case studies of two academically talented, African American children of poverty suggest the ethnic diversity within the population of children considered "African American." One child's experiences demonstrate how prior socialization into norms consistent with school culture can result in response behaviors validated by teachers and in-group peers. Another child's experiences demonstrate a cycle of engagement with story, marginalization for inappropriate responses, and social exclusion.

Findings suggest teachers' need to evaluate the hidden curriculum of valued response and recognize the risk of perpetuating existing social inequities if the responses of ethnic minority students are not validated.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Nature of the Problem

Today's educators face criticism harsher, perhaps, than it has ever been. The status of students' literacy is in question (Chall, 1996; Coulson, 1996), classroom populations are growing more culturally and economically diverse (Perry & Fraser, 1993; Villegas, 1991), and teachers are caught in the middle of political struggles regarding the best way to teach reading. Proponents of basalized reading instruction and advocates for whole language approaches to reading polarize perspectives on ideal contexts for literacy learning (Duff, 1996). If, as Banks (1992) suggests, by the year 2020, approximately 46% of students served in U.S. classrooms will be students of color, educators and teacher educators must become better informed regarding the relationship between ethnicity and literacy. With these relationships defined, teachers may more appropriately modify their classroom practices to foster the literacy of a maximum number of students and meet the challenges posed by their critics.

Many elementary school teachers are moving toward literature-based instruction within a reader response approach to teach reading (Lehman, 1995; Moss, 1992; Wilkinson & Kido, 1997). Particular perspectives on how teachers transition to this new way of looking at literacy and literature have been explored by researchers (e.g., Sharer, 1992; Yench, 1989), and it is clear that literature is taking root in children's classrooms, through the use of literature circles, read-alouds, and silent reading. A literature-based philosophy of teaching reading involves teachers' and children's use of real works of literature in child-centered ways in order to teach reading. Lehman (1995) explains that literature-based teachers develop an "altered

philosophy about the power and potential of literature in children's lives to help them become fully literate beings. In other words, through *literary* experiences, *literacy* is accomplished" (p.108, italics in original). She and her colleagues note that the "faces" of literature-based instruction differ from teacher to teacher.

Most literature-based programs include read-alouds of literature as a basic program component. A read-aloud is generally considered to be an oral reading of book, either by a teacher reading to a group or by a child reading to someone else. Researchers agree that children with exposure to read-alouds are at an advantage in learning to read independently (Teale, 1984), and, based on the consensus that read-alouds benefit children, several writers have suggested ways to conduct read-alouds (e.g., Holdaway, 1979; Lamme, 1985; Trelease, 1982). In a similar fashion, in process-oriented writing programs which often accompany literature-based reading programs, children read aloud the pieces that they have written to an audience of the teacher and classmates. These read-alouds of group-shared writing often occur during "group-share" or share time (Calkins, 1994; Dyson, 1993; Graves, 1995).

Although considerable work has been done in secondary and postsecondary classrooms (e.g., Altieri, 1996; Beach, 1995; Ho, 1990; Jordan & Purves, 1993; Spears-Bunton, 1990), little research has explicitly examined the relationship between an elementary-aged child's ethnic identity and his or her development as a reader and writer. A reader response perspective on literacy suggests that an aesthetic reading of a text engages a reader in a complex process by which his or her thinking may be transformed *and* in which the understandings and attitudes he or she takes away from the text will have been influenced by the unique thoughts and perspectives of the reader as he or she approached and engaged with the text. A social response perspective includes in response considerations a focus on the unique social context in which response occurs. In this study, I examined the potential relationships between

ethnic identities and readers' responses in a multi-ethnic classroom because many cultural minority students (especially racial minorities) achieve low levels of literacy in elementary schools. Students' academic failure may be caused by inappropriate teaching and therefore be preventable. (See Reynolds, Taylor, Steffensen, Shirey, & Anderson, 1982, for a similar argument regarding middle-grade readers.)

I use critical theory as a general lens for viewing the classroom. Critical theorists pose the challenge of identifying and dismantling the social constructs that have disempowered cultural (including ethnic, gender, linguistically different, and economic) groups in society. Perry and Fraser (1993) assert that teachers often overlook minority students' cultures and traditions. As a researcher interested in language and literacy, I observe reading instruction in classrooms housing philosophically different teachers, culturally diverse students, and radically different instructional approaches to literacy. Consistent with my philosophy of viewing instruction and learning through a critical lens, I have begun to question the relative value placed on particular kinds of reader-responses, especially the responses of ethnic minority children. It is through this general lens that I describe the findings of this study, although I do not formally analyze the findings against the perspectives of critical theorists (e.g., Giroux, McLaren, Gay).

Researchers observing in elementary schools have documented that when literature is used as the medium for reading instruction, young children frequently respond to the text orally, by moving their bodies, by writing, or by engaging in seemingly unrelated activities (Hickman, 1981; Smith, 1997; Whitin, 1996). These responses are noted as trends in research with both African American and European American students—but with differing degrees of intensity. Culturally situated teachers, I have found, respond differently from one another as they encounter children's observable responses. Teachers' responses could be classified as part of a

hidden curriculum (Beach, 1993). Children, also culturally situated, develop conceptions of literacy that are based in part on the language (cultural) signs in texts even as they are continuing to develop as culturally- and ethnically conscious beings. They are also in the process of developing a sense of self within the community of the classroom and are developing ideas about "reading." "Self" is fluid, changing, and constantly adapted through dialogue with others (Moraes, 1996). Conscientious educators should want to know more about the potentially interactive relationship between developing conceptions of ethnicity and children's growing literacies as they are influenced by and exhibited in classrooms.

Purpose of the Study

The goal of this study was to explore and describe the potential relationships between ethnicity and children's responses to literature and group-shared writing (a response experience not unlike that of read-alouds of literature) within an ethnically diverse classroom. I acknowledge, as does Wilson (1992), that "not all books are literature" (p.165) and thus all writing (including children's writing) is also not necessarily "literature." Nevertheless, I included the group-sharing of children's writing in this study because the participant structure (Cazden, 1988) of that experience was similar to the participant structure of the literature read-alouds. Further, because most students' responses to the literature were classified as expressive rather than interpretive (or simply responses to efferent questions by the teacher), the differences in how children engaged in these two kinds of stories (by published authors and by classmates) were minimal. One could argue that the familiarity and physical presence of the authors of children's writing, when shared, could have influenced the responses and thus have made them qualitatively different. However, I observed the peer presence to influence the depth, content, or modes of

response in the written responses of only one student. Otherwise, oral responses were similar, and the structures of the conversations were almost identical. (Minor differences will be addressed in Chapter Eight.)

I chose to conduct this case study in an ethnically diverse setting so that I could observe the influence of a diverse classroom interpretive community. My focus on community grows out of my belief that response is social in nature. I used ethnographic methods of observation, interview, artifact collection, and research journaling with primary grade, case study children of differing ethnic and cultural backgrounds. I characterize the current study as exploratory and descriptive (Yin, 1989), with the potential for proposing tentative explanations about ethnicity and response in one setting (and thus, possibly contributing to the later construction of a grounded theory upon completing further studies). I realize the difficulties inherent in taking on such a task when the definitions of "reader response" and "ethnicity" are so slippery (Aboud, 1988; Desai, 1997). Frisby (1992) and Garcia (1994) note that even the term "culture" has assumed several different connotations among educators and the public. Neither response nor ethnicity lends itself well to measurements or empirical description (Purves, 1995; Smith & Brookins, 1997).

Therefore, to meet the challenge of working with ambiguous vocabulary and phenomena resistant to measurement, I depend, in this study, on thick description. In my study, I looked closely at the observable ways young children responded (e.g., acting, speaking, drawing, writing) in a classroom as well as the nature of the interpretive, social communities out of which these responses grew (Beach, 1993; Fish, 1980). I also use description, rather than measurement, of ethnicities.

The responses I describe in this study are mediated in several ways (Nelms, 1998, personal communication). First, a reader's *real*, spontaneous response is an internal phenomenon. Therefore, a researcher is made aware of this response only

after it has been outwardly expressed in some way. The methods by which the response is outwardly demonstrated can be called the "modes of response" (Hickman, 1992, p.193) and should be differentiated from the *content* of the response. The essence of the expression (mode or content) can never be the same as the true response; it is merely an approximation. Second, many of these responses are not expressed immediately upon occurring but rather are expressed at a later time--for some children, only after successfully acquiring a speaking turn in the discussion. Finally, the expression of these internal responses is influenced by the social nature of the classroom. How children express these responses depends on the audience of peers and teacher. Therefore, as I describe children's "responses" in this study, I am necessarily describing my observations of the mediated exhibitions of readers' responses. I am also describing their responses to *hearing* a story rather than reading a story independently (Altieri, 1995).

In addition, I collected data on the participating children's developing senses of ethnic identity and understanding. The early years of elementary school represent a time in which children's understandings of ethnicity and culture are rapidly developing (Aboud, 1987; Holmes, 1995). Although between the ages of three and four years, children are generally unaware of their own ethnic affiliations, children between the ages of four to eight years begin developing an awareness of their own ethnic group affiliations (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987). As they engage in this process of constructing an ethnic identity, children may even be reinterpreting their worlds and their ethnic affiliations through the cultural information presented in literature.

Even more than the influence of literature, peers and teachers play a role in which parts of an ethnic identity are made visible in a social setting. A symbolic interactionist perspective would suggest that part of identity development depends on how an individual perceives that *others* perceive him or her--somewhat like Cooley's

"looking glass" metaphor (Hewitt, 1994). Goffman (1959) proposed that we also make presentations of self that are consistent with the definition of a situation as it is defined by others participating in our "performance." Therefore, I included in my design a focus on the ethnically diverse interpretive community of the classroom to see if and how that context shaped response.

I used the methods of ethnographic observation, interview, and document/artifact collection and analysis. I felt an analysis of children's responses (collected in the spirit of Hickman, 1981), when examined in light of children's developing ethnicities (Spears-Bunton, 1990), might eventually yield significant insights into ways to create classroom reading situations that are supportive of diverse groups of children. The findings of this study suggest researchers should seek ways to help prepare culturally sensitive teachers who support children through a complex phase of identity formation and better prepare preservice teachers to use literature-based reading programs (Lewis, 1997; Scharer, 1995) or "literature-based instruction" (Lehman, 1995, p.108) with ethnically diverse groups of children.

In the course of completing this study, I learned the importance of the classroom community in the validation or invalidation of children's responses and developed a deeper understanding of the complexity of response when considered in light of ethnic identity, student culture, and the social environment of the classroom. Also, this study problematizes the theory that racial and ethnic identities are the same.

Theoretical Perspective

Reader Response in Historical Perspective

To better understand the intricacies of reader response theory, I offer a brief introduction to this theory's development and its influence in the recent history of literacy instruction. I will trace its history back to the transactional theory of literature

response. I will describe how the terminology has evolved to convey multiple meanings to theorists, researchers, and teachers interested in the teaching of literature.

Since the publication of Louise Rosenblatt's *Literature as Exploration* in 1938, a tension has existed in English departments between text-based, analytic New Criticism and the reader-oriented theories of reader response advocates. New Critics have traditionally held that literary works should be analyzed objectively after close readings--embracing a perspective that emphasizes the text's authority in possessing meaning and the reader's task in identifying that singular "meaning." In contrast, Rosenblatt developed a theory that upheld the importance of the reader, the text, and the context in which the reading took place. Meaning, she stressed, resided not in the marks on the page (text), but rather in the experience brought forth by the transaction of reader, text, and context (Rosenblatt, 1969, 1985). She built this transactional theory of literature response upon the progressive work of John Dewey and William James and distinguished her vision of transaction (circular, reciprocal) from interaction (fixed entities working upon one another). The New Critics' formalistic analysis of literature, however, continued to dominate teaching in schools and universities until the late 1970s, when deconstructionists began to argue that the treatment of literature in isolation "devalued the personal ethical and emotional responses of the reader" (Rosenblatt, 1991, p.59), and a new significance was placed on the backgrounds and personal responses of readers.

In the last twenty years since the paradigm shift toward reader-oriented examinations of literary experience, literacy researchers have observed readers for evidence of how the invisible reading "transaction" happens. The literary experience, as described by Rosenblatt, is influenced by the nature of the text's stimuli *and* the reader's mind, emotions, and experiences. In short, no reading experience can be exactly the same for two individuals because text and reader are involved in a complex

literary transaction, and the work of art cannot be analyzed in the absence of a consideration of the social context (e.g., individual reader background, situation) of the reading. The literary transaction is defined as "the synthesis of what the reader already knows and feels and desires with what the literary text offers--the patterned sensations, emotions, and ideas through which the author has sought to communicate his sense of life" (Rosenblatt, 1968, pp.272-273).

An underlying theme in Rosenblatt's work is the desire for the reading of literature to promote an informed, critical, democratic society. Therefore, she makes the claim that although the environment for reading should validate and foster readers' first, spontaneous responses, the goal of developing critical response is not met until the reader begins reflecting upon those responses, developing critical interpretations of the text. It is in this spirit that she explains that free, uninhibited response is a "*necessary* condition of sound literary judgment" (1995; p.72, italics in original) but is not "sufficient" to develop a critical readership. She also notes that not all interpretations of a work are equally defensible when measured against the information the text provides.

Reader response theorists and researchers following in the footsteps of Rosenblatt generally credit her as the founder of the perspective granting credibility to the reader's role in the transaction. However, Rosenblatt (1985) expresses concern that

some of those who have belatedly espoused what sounds like a transactional view of the relationship between reader and text still often tend to emphasize one to the practical neglect of the other. In contrast, the transactional concept has always kept both reader and text in focus. (p.103)

Further, she is fearful of perspectives that so emphasize the role of the reader that the text becomes "passive." Instead, Rosenblatt and other theorists true to her philosophy (e.g., May, 1995) call for a balance between the validation of a reader's personal

response (reader-oriented) and the critical reflection on those interpretations on the basis of the text (text-oriented) as well as the perspectives of other readers. May (1995) explains the growing influence of reader response theory on teachers' practice.

[Teachers] allow students to read a book and formulate their own opinions of it. They encourage students to keep response journals about what they read and to tie their reading to their everyday world. However, reader response theory requires more than early responses if the children are going to understand how authors write. . . . [They should be encouraged to] use critical processes in order to discover different interpretations for the story they are reading, [and] they must have teachers who will show them that a story can have more than one meaning. (p.16)

Lee (1995) contends that the discrepancy between reader response theory and what happens in classrooms is worrisome. I agree with her, and can identify three potential reasons for that discrepancy: (1) vague or misunderstood terminology, (2) confusion over stance, and (3) the constraints of practice in real school contexts. First, what is called "reader response" by researchers and teachers often includes such activities as answering teachers' questions, story mapping, and identifying story grammar (e.g., Kosanovich, 1996; Heller & McLellan, 1993) or, as noted by May (1995), simply leaves the response at the level of the raw response without probing for critical reflection. Thus there is confusion among researchers and teachers about what constitutes a "response" (DeKay, 1997). Next, as Rosenblatt (1982) explains, many teachers confuse children by reportedly wanting them to be interested and engaged in story but then switch to an efferent stance as the teachers ask literal or recall-based questions. Tighe (1995) identifies the efferent approach as the one most emphasized as teachers read literature with students. Blake (1995) suggests one cause of this confusion in stance is that most preservice teachers' experiences with New Criticism, in college English courses, influence them to use the same text-oriented analytical methods with their own students. Finally, teachers work within the contextual

constraints of real schools--not the ivory towers out of which many teachers perceive theory to grow. Teachers struggle with growing numbers of students, a loss of power over how their time is structured, and the implementation of top-down mandates for particular curricula to be used in their classes.

Nevertheless, the popularity and multiplicity of "reader response" perspectives is such that Beach (1993) has recently differentiated between types of reader response theories, showing how a response event can be analyzed through the lens of multiple reader response perspectives, including textual, experiential, psychological, social, and cultural theories of response. The perspectives I employ in this study include experiential (based on the reader experiencing a lived-through engagement with a story) and social (understanding how those responses are mediated in a social setting, including rules for preferred modes of response).

Purves and Beach (1972) have acknowledged the challenges of learning about this transaction through observable, measurable means. Observable responses do not necessarily suggest the depth of the total response since responses to literature are largely internal, somewhat subconscious, and possibly scattered across time.

Transaction and the Construction of Meaning as Culturally-Influenced

Classroom reading interactions constitute a context for the construction of meanings. Research on Wittrock's (1974) generative learning theory illustrates that children (like adults) actively construct their understandings by relating new information to their prior knowledge of the world (Wittrock, 1991). Reading (silently, aloud, or listening to what is read) is a generative activity and requires that the reader, in order to comprehend, use prior experiences to build understanding (Doctorow, Wittrock, and Marks, 1978). Linden and Wittrock (1981) found that reading comprehension could be facilitated by helping students "relate their knowledge and

experience" (p.45) to the text, as well as making associations, inferences, and attending to the text. Readers are active participants in the reading experience; stimulating readers' experiences and encouraging readers to expand on a text improve the comprehension of text. The role of prior experience in reading seems significant in multicultural classrooms since individuals develop, though culture, complex schemata (or what Schutz, 1976, would call "relevance structures") to simplify functions in everyday communication. Likewise, readers call upon schemata when engaged with text. That is, readers come to reading experiences with histories and understandings framed by their cultures.

Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert, and Goetz (1977) explained that "the schemata by which people attempt to assimilate text . . . vary according to age, subculture, experience, education, interests, and belief systems" (p.378). In their related study of reading comprehension, Reynolds, Taylor, Steffensen, Shirey, and Anderson (1982) gave ambiguous reading passages to Black and White eighth-graders. The passages addressed an incident which could be interpreted as "sounding"--a friendship insult ritual common among Black students of that age group and in that setting--or as a fight, depending upon the ways in which the readers filled the "gaps" in content (Iser, 1978). The researchers found that both the students' recall of the passages and measures on probes designed to detect differences in interpretation reflected significant differences between Black and White students' reading comprehension. Further, they concluded that those differences were related to students' culture-specific background knowledge and perspectives. They asserted that their "data strongly support the view that cultural schemata influence reading comprehension" (p.361) and that critical analysis of classroom reading materials to determine cultural biases may indicate why many cultural minority students fail to demonstrate high reading comprehension. Reynolds et al. had replicated the findings of a similar, earlier study by Steffenson,

Joag-dev, and Anderson (1979) in which readers from India and America read passages about Indian and American weddings. Because of the culturally specific content, subjects demonstrated greater and more successful recall of important content from the passage describing their own cultures, even when they had read those passages more rapidly than the passages from the other culture.

The importance of a reader's background is apparent in research on readers' stances. In her research on the stances taken by a sample of seventh and eleventh graders, Langer (1990) identified four stances evident during the readings of literary and informative texts: 1) being in and stepping into an envisionment, 2) being in and moving through an envisionment, 3) stepping back and rethinking what one knows, and 4) stepping out and objectifying the experience. The first two stages required that the reader use prior knowledge to construct an understanding of the material in the text in order to be drawn "in" to the text. In these stages, students used their knowledge of similar situations, their personal reactions to the content of the passage, and their understandings of different parts of the passages to develop an envisionment. Stepping back and rethinking represented the point at which the reading experience began to shape new understandings, and the reader sometimes revised prior knowledge and understandings based on his or her understanding of the content of the passage. Langer's data were collected primarily through think-aloud protocols of students who had been trained to talk through their thinking processes as they read the passages. The culturally influenced background experiences of individual students supported their efforts to construct meaning out of the information in the texts, and the substance of the envisionment worked back upon the assumptions, beliefs, and understandings of the students.

Rosenblatt (1968) acknowledges that the student will bring to a reading a "social philosophy assimilated primarily from his family and community backgrounds"

(p.94). Such world-views based on experience and primary group socialization help a child to develop a particular relevance structure (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Schutz (1976) explained that members of a cultural group use their "cultural pattern as a natural and trustworthy scheme of orientation" (p.99) and that this system of relevances was part of an individual's taken-for-granted thinking, unless discrepant information or settings were encountered. Culturally influenced ways of looking at the world thus influence how a child interprets what he or she encounters in everyday life. Therefore, culture, and the socially constructed reality created as a result of it, will also influence the "reading" of a particular reader. It is important to remember, however, that individuals are simultaneously members of different cultural subgroups (e.g., European American, female, low socioeconomic group, extended family member, youngest sibling), each of which exert an influence on the behaviors the individual will choose to exhibit. Desai (1997) argues, "As we look at the role of culture in a reader's response, we must consider the multiple communities that frame our social, cultural, and political context, and we can then begin to consider the role that a teacher and the classroom play in this process" (p.162). Membership in other microcultures, including the classroom community where much dialogue occurs, is likely to exert an influence on the responses of readers.

Banks (1988) defines ethnicity as "the individual's psychological identification with his or her own ethnic group" (p.82) and argues that ethnicity helps individuals develop a sense of belonging. Ethnicity is often "highly subjective" (Slonim, 1991, p.4) since an individual's identification is hard to measure. Researchers note that ethnicity influences a person's values, thinking, behaviors, and opinions (Slonim, 1991) and explain that an ethnic group members explicitly share in a "common cultural value system" (Holmes, 1995, p.4). Most researchers acknowledge the difficulty of defining ethnicity (e.g., Aboud, 1988; Pedersen, 1993; Slonim, 1991; Smith & Brookins, 1997).

Furthermore, since members of an ethnic group may exhibit some--but not all--behaviors, values, and beliefs of an ethnic group, researchers risk stereotyping or drawing faulty conclusions regarding needs of ethnically diverse students (Frisby, 1993).

Banks (1988) also defines ethnic identification as a series of stages, each of which fosters in a person a new and revised view of others similar to and different from himself or herself. Learning about the ways children differ in their responses as a result of ethnicity, then, can be problematic, since the consequences of ethnic identification can vary over time as individual children progress through qualitatively different stages. Ethnic identity researchers have also investigated the relationship between self-esteem and ethnic or racial identity (Frisby & Tucker, 1993; Smith & Brookins, 1997) and have heatedly debated whether or not ethnicity influences learning styles (e.g., Frisby, 1993).

Aboud (1987), in her review of studies about children's identification with and attitudes toward ethnic groups, identifies a number of other problems surrounding the "measurement" of ethnicity. She notes the difficulty of finding instruments which can be standardized across cultures and states that the most common means of measuring children's ethnic identification, which are often based on physical appearances of ethnic groups, may not be targeting the most "critical attribute" (p.38) of an ethnic identification. Measurements of ethnic identity with young children are further problematized because children do not perceive ethnicity as a constant until about age six. In fact, Davidson, Yu, and Phelan (1993) found that children's ethnic identity remained fluid and subject to social reconstruction as late as the high school years. In their conclusion, they assert that the "presentation of ethnicity changes in response to the varied demands of community and school" (p.85) and state that schools play an important part in youths' construction of ethnic identity. Smith and Brookins (1997)

explain "there has been endless debate concerning the ethnic identity of African American children" (p.359) and contend that little consensus exists about the ethnic development of young children. Many of the studies conducted with young children during the last fifty years were ridden with methodological flaws.

Children's ethnic backgrounds were of interest to me in this study. Ethnicity and the child's identification with a group may influence how the child approaches text, how he or she structures social interactions surrounding the reading of literature and group-shared writing, and how the child visibly demonstrates response. Ethnicity (regardless of whether it can be "measured") and the nature of the ethnic group's history as voluntary or involuntary immigrants may influence the nature of primary group socialization (Ogbu, 1995) and, therefore, inspire readers to encounter books--and one another--in different ways.

The use of multicultural literature has been proposed as a way to help validate the ethnic identities of students in today's diverse classrooms and to help children from middle class, European American cultures learn to appreciate the cultural characteristics of ethnic minority groups (e.g., Altieri, 1993; Enciso, 1997; Macphée, 1997; Rasinski & Padak, 1990; Sims, 1983). Ferdman (1991) questions the relevance of traditional literary content for readers of non-mainstream cultural identities. In a discussion of the meaning of literacy in a multiethnic society, he states that the cultural transmission inherent in much literacy education can present difficulties for cultural minorities since the guidelines for group membership in the non-dominant group might differ significantly from those of the dominant group. His comments reflect a philosophy similar to one proposed by Asante (1991)--that ethnic minority children must often lose their own cultural identities to learn the White culture of schools. The interest in integrating multicultural literature into schools has been a result of the concerns of those who believe, as I do, that the needs of ethnic minority students are

not being sufficiently met by schools and that the lure of literature is reduced when children do not sufficiently see their own cultures and values demonstrated in literature (Liaw, 1995; Sims, 1983).

Therefore, I argue that if children, as readers, bring ethnically influenced (and dynamic) relevance structures to the reading of literature, the transaction between reader and text can be influenced by those socially constructed schemata. The interpretation of text and the mode of response will differ from reader to reader since only the "stimulus provided by the work" (Applebee, 1978, p.89) is constant; the strategies for interpreting and constructing meaning will vary. In the midst of individual differences, it is possible that children will demonstrate patterns of similarity in how they respond (patterns not unlike those found across age groups). Furthermore, a child's developing sense of ethnic identification and conception of "self" has the potential to be influenced by her transactions within the interpretive community. Meek (1990) quotes Miller regarding the power of literature and culture: "Individuals become who they are within the discourses of their culture. As part of that culture, literature both makes and remakes its readers, especially but not only, in school" (Miller, 1986 in Meek, 1990, p.4).

Research Questions

I designed this study to answer the following questions.

1. In one multi-age classroom, what are the possible relationships between a child's developing ethnic identity and his or her (mediated, observable) responses to stories read aloud by a teacher and to classmates' group-shared writing?
2. What might be the relationship(s) between the reader's responses and the nature of the ethnically diverse interpretive community in which the reading takes place?

For the purposes of this study, the following terms have these meanings:

1. "Reader response" is the term that indicates the experiences of the child as he or she engages in a transaction with a text. For most of this dissertation, this response will be limited to those parts of the mediated response that I am capable of observing and documenting, although reader response is highly internal. The term reader response acknowledges the role of the child as an active participant in the construction of meaning from a text. In this study, the children are responding to read-alouds, by the teacher or me, rather than texts they read on their own. They are also responding to classmates' group-shared writing.

Rosenblatt (1968) identifies a range of stances a reader can take toward a story or poem. At one end of the continuum is an efferent stance, or one which is primarily for seeking and remembering information. At the other end of the continuum is an aesthetic stance. A reader taking an aesthetic stance is reading the text for the benefit of the lived-through experience. Rosenblatt mentions that the continuum is mostly theoretical and that most people actually use a range of stances when reading. For instance, one might read a story for information if the story characters were engaged in a situation similar to one the reader had experienced--if the reader were seeking facts or advice, perhaps--and this would represent a more efferent stance. However, one might read a story to see the world through the eyes of the characters or to live through another's life vicariously, thus using a mostly aesthetic stance. She confesses to being more interested in aesthetic stances (than efferent) because the aesthetic stance has been more traditionally ignored in the literature curriculum.

In the current study, I will examine responses that are both aesthetic and efferent in nature. Aesthetic responses constitute what I perceive to be evidence of a lived-through experience. I am also compelled to identify and explain efferent responses, particularly those in response to a teacher taking an efferent stance, because

of the dominance of efferent questions asked by the teacher. Furthermore, since children were probed only infrequently to engage in critical reflection on their responses, I make no claim that the responses in evidence here--spontaneous, first responses--show evidence of the kinds of critical readings in which Rosenblatt (1995) or May (1995) hope children will be prompted to engage.

2. "Ethnic identity" refers to an individual's sense that he or she belongs to a particular group of people, sharing in their values, customs, and beliefs and usually includes include common physiological characteristics, acknowledged by the individual, such as physical features shared by ethnic group members (Aboud, 1988; Slonim, 1991; Smith & Brookins, 1997). One might also have a sense of shared "in-group" practices. One's identification with an ethnic group generally is not solely the result of ascribed status but is often also the result of choice and the values and culture of the family unit. Ethnic identity should also be understood to be dynamic, as individuals progress across stages of development *and* redefine themselves on the basis of changing social contexts (Davidson, Yu, & Phelan, 1993). A wide range of individual behaviors, beliefs, and values might be found within an ethnic group. I use ethnicity as a term to indicate cultural group membership rather than race (which I argue is more highly based on skin color). In this study, for instance, I will argue that the case study students I describe represent different ethnicities--even if children's discussions and explicit understandings show attention to race far more than ethnicity.

3. "Literature" will be the term to describe the published books that children encountered in the classroom. The teacher or I read these books aloud; children read them alone or in small groups; and these books were simply in the physical proximity of children. In this study, I did not seek to evaluate the quality of the literature used, so my terminology here differs from that of Wilson (1992) mostly because our purposes are different.

4. "Group-shared writing" identifies the writing participating children completed in their journals at the beginning of each school day. After a period of time called the "writing workshop," the teacher invited children to orally "read" (sometimes this was not reading with a one-to-one correspondence between words on the page and what was read aloud; for young children these were often approximations) their work to an audience of classmates. Children responded to this writing in much the same way they responded to read-alouds of literature, due primarily to the similarity of participant structures for these events.

5. "Read-alouds" are the events when the teachers or I read a book--orally--to children. For these readings, children were seated as audience members to the readings, although children were not always physically close enough to the book to be able to see the text. The read-aloud event is different from the silent reading of a text on one's own because it occurs within a community of readers, it requires the child to listen to the words as they are read by someone else (thus, inflection and pacing are determined by the person reading it aloud), and children, in order to "participate," must vocalize their responses in ways consistent with the culture of the classroom. In read-alouds, the adult reader often adjusts the reading to accommodate the (perceived) needs of the listener (Altwerger, Diehl-Faxon, Dockstader-Anderson, 1985).

6. "Culture" will have a meaning broader than that of ethnicity and will include all the observable "values, beliefs, and notions about acceptable and unacceptable behavior and other socially constructed ideas that members of the culture are taught are true" (Garcia, 1994, p.51). It will also include the "intangible" ideas and values that are ordinarily "inaccessible to direct observation" (Malinowski, 1961, p.69) but can be assessed inductively, though interview and inference.

7. "Think alouds" are used by some researchers (e.g., Langer, 1990) to prompt study participants to verbalize their thoughts during the processes of reading and

writing. Langer (1990) defends her use of this procedure by explaining that when she "compared think alouds and stimulated recalls during reading and writing . . . [she] found that think alouds tended to be longer and contained some of the more momentary decisions that were no longer remembered during stimulated recalls" (pp.235-236). I did not use think alouds in my study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Children's Responses to Literature: Methodologies, Foci, and Findings

The responses of children can be difficult to examine. Over the past twenty years, researchers interested in children's responses to literature have increasingly used qualitative methods to study the diverse ways children and texts transact. Hickman's (1979) ethnographic study of children's responses to literature in an elementary school setting was one of the earliest studies to analyze children's responses to literature in a naturalistic setting. Hickman's four month investigation of children's responses in three mixed-grade classrooms yielded rich information regarding the observable responses of children to literary texts. She became a participant-observer in the class, interacting with children, and recording what participating children were reading, writing, and saying to one another in social interactions. By becoming a classroom participant, Hickman was also able to find connections between the reading of literature and delayed responses (e.g. artwork made long after the reading of a particular book, reference to the text made in social talk long after the reading). Her work was one of the first to examine responses in the real classroom setting, and her findings were general. Ethnographic methods, she admitted, made research a little like "net fishing" (Hickman, 1981, p.345). Because her study was the first of its kind, she explained that she was unsure of exactly what to look for as "response." Her thorough study, however, allowed her to provide some valuable, if only rough, student-response categories. Martinez and Roser (1991) note Hickman's categories:

- a. listening behaviors such as applause or joining in refrains,
 - b. contact with books such as browsing or keeping books at hand,
 - c. acting on the impulse to share by reading together or sharing discoveries,
 - d. oral responses such as retelling or freely commenting on stories,
 - e. actions and drama,
 - f. making things such as pictures or games, and
 - g. writing about literature or using literary models in one's writing.
- (p.646)

Hickman's work, and the subsequent studies by her contemporaries at The Ohio State University (e.g. Hepler, 1982; Kiefer, 1982; Lehr, 1985), pioneered the naturalistic study of children's responses to literature. Although much work on response had been conducted in the preceding twenty years, other researchers (e.g. Applebee, 1978) had designed studies that were more controlled in nature and focused on eliciting the specific oral and written responses of children rather than observing how they occurred in natural contexts. Other, related studies concentrated on secondary or college students' responses (Beach & Brunetti, 1976; Squire, 1964). In a review of literature on response, Purves and Beach (1972) argued that further research on literature response could assist teachers in selecting literature, gaining a better understanding of how and why students take a particular stance toward literature, and preventing potential sources of confusion during experiences with literature. Louise Rosenblatt (1985), too, has called for the further use of ethnographic methods in studying literature transactions.

Fortunately, the appeals of these researchers have resulted in some additional qualitative research to improve our understanding of how children respond to literature. Naturalistic studies, such as Hickman's, are sparse, however, because of the time commitment demanded by ethnographic research and the difficulty of "catching" reader response in action. Other researchers (e.g., Altieri, 1996; Anderson & Many, 1992; Grice & Vaughn, 1992; Liaw, 1995) have attempted to design studies that,

although qualitative, do not capture the essence of what happens in the natural, unmanipulated setting. One exception, Cox (1997), however, has been engaging in an ethnographic longitudinal study of reader response. She plans to follow her participants from kindergarten to sixth grade. Cox finds that children in the primary grades (i.e., K-3) maintain a primarily aesthetic stance toward literature rather than the efferent reading that may take place in higher grades and concludes that children in response-centered classrooms are generally willing and even eager to respond to literature. She noted the following response categories for young readers in the natural setting: questioning, focusing on a part, making associations, hypothesizing, making explanations, observing print and language, recalling or retelling content, performing, and analyzing (1997, p.31).

Teacher-researchers are also investigating readers' responses in their own classrooms. Gallas (1997) described Denzel, a student whose response to read-alouds was disengagement, and sought answers to how she could have fostered his engagement by viewing story time from Denzel's unique perspective. In her study, Denzel, a child with limited outside-of-school exposure to read-alouds, found classroom read-aloud experiences purposeless, never engaging in the aesthetic experiences Gallas sought for her students. She attributed his behaviors as indicative of his "uninitiated" status in the "ritual" (1997, p.251) of read-aloud, noting that teachers sometimes forget how foreign the event might be to children without prior school event experiences. Her comments challenge response-oriented teachers to keep checks on their own assumptions of how their students perceive response events. Myrick (1996) and Wilkinson and Kido (1997) have researched the responses of their own college-age students responses to literature. A particularly thought-provoking (and relevant) teacher research study was conducted by Macphee (1997). As a first grade teacher, Macphee wondered about the multicultural sensitivities of her first

grade, affluent, European American students. She was committed to Banks' (1994) transformational approach to a multicultural curriculum as well as the tenets of reader response, so she began reading fiction and nonfiction that showed African American characters as protagonists. Using qualitative methods, she recorded the responses of students during the read-aloud, invited them to write or draw what they perceived to be the most important part of the book, and later interviewed them about their writing. She found that White children initially identified with the White characters in the story, but that children did demonstrate empathy for characters who were the subject of ethnic or racial discrimination. As she read more stories with the children, they began to identify more with the African American characters (such as supplying more emotional information about a character) and showed a "desire to correct a social injustice" (p.38). She concluded that, in a multicultural society, "Reading multicultural literature is one way for white ethnically encapsulated students to come face to face with the expectations, beliefs, and attitudes of culturally diverse people" (p.39). She also appealed for more research on how White children respond to multicultural literature.

Researchers have also considered which kinds of classroom contexts best promote the responses of children. We are reminded by Squire (1990) that "[t]he ways in which we teach literature will affect our students' responses" (p.21). Hickman (1992) and Galda (1988) concur. Carlisle (1988) examined how first-grade children responded to children's literature, implementing an eight-week curriculum intervention designed to enhance students' observable responses. Using observation, interviewing, and classroom discussion as data sources, she found these children could be encouraged to expand their responses given a trustful, risk-taking environment in which literacy was a focus throughout the curriculum. She argued that, in such circumstances, perhaps young children are capable of far more observable response

activity than teachers and researchers have traditionally suggested. Guice (1995) suggested that researchers have not sufficiently explored the role of context in shaping children's responses to literature. She identified four influential response contexts in which the sixth-graders in her study responded to books (silent reading, book selection, writing, and aesthetic activity) and also identified which teacher practices supported or inhibited response. She notes the teacher's prohibition of between-student talk as a factor inhibiting response but explains that children frequently and covertly broke the rule--responding through talk. She advises that the role of the reader and the role of the text have been well-explored in other reader response research but that the role of context has been underexplored.

Other classroom characteristics found to be encouraging of young children's literary response include chances to write their wonderings (Dugan, 1996), the use of small-group opportunities to discuss literature (Dugan, 1996; Eeds & Peterson, 1990; Lin, 1995), a classroom filled with quality picture books (Musthafa, 1997; Smith, 1993; Trotter, 1995), a teacher who honors student-initiated talk and diverse opinions (Guice, 1995; Lin, 1995), a teacher who allows silences and provides choices (Cox, 1997; Trotter, 1995), time for reading and discussion (Cothorn, 1993) and a culturally sensitive teacher who guides students through culturally unfamiliar content (Jordan & Purves, 1993; Smith, 1993). Spiegel (1996) specifically recognizes the atmosphere of trust in response-supportive classrooms. An essential element of a response-supportive classroom, trust helps ensure that students feel comfortable expressing their personal responses and know those responses will be validated. Blake (1995) suggests that the teacher reduce his or her role in question-asking so that students will express feelings, memories, and associations, although Cianciolo (1995) reports that teachers can use questioning as one method to promote children's critical aesthetic response. Most researchers include some statement suggesting that examining multiple

perspectives through interpretation, criticism, or analysis is an ultimate goal within a reader response paradigm (e.g., Beach, 1993; Blake, 1995; Cianciolo, 1995; Cox, 1997; Galda, 1988; May, 1995; Musthafa, 1997; Sipe, 1997).

Children's responses have also been analyzed to identify the most common kinds of responses observed among particular groups of children. Elliot and Stahle (1993) observed first grade students involved in one-on-one story (adult and child) read-alouds and noted the children's use of pointing to or commenting on pictures, predictions, and evaluative comments. Among the at-risk fifth-graders she studied, Dugan (1996) observed students making predictions, clarifying and resolving misunderstandings, clarifying language, imagining, becoming personally involved in the story, voicing opinions, and retelling. Although Dugan's study was not an ethnography, she did employ some qualitative methods, including discussion observation, think-alouds, reading inventories, and written responses, as she gathered data on student response. In an additional study of an at-risk population, Trotter (1995) examined the responses of two first-grade boys as they discussed literature in a reading intervention class. She found that conversation about books helped children monitor their developing understandings of the book and that the amount of child-talk in book discussions changed over the course of the one year study. As Applebee (1978) noted, children's understandings of literary elements mature as they grow older, so children's potential for interpretive response increases over time.

Conversation and opportunities to talk also seem to increase the depth of the reader's response. Sipe (1997, 1998) found that children in first and second grades developed impressive literary understandings by responding to read-alouds. In his study, children engaged in analytical response, personal response, intertextual response, transparent response (indicating a lived-through experience), and performative response. However, the bulk of children's conversational turns were

analytical (73%). He notes that the teacher supported response by withholding her own interpretations, by refusing to ask literal or recall-based questions, and by allowing children to talk during reading. In fact, since two-thirds of children's conversational turns occurred during the reading, he proposes that the traditional practice of requiring children to wait until the end of the story to respond may cause children to lose their responses. Cox and Many (1992) found, through student interviews on how students responded to literature and film, that children's responses (in this case, responses to their earlier responses) sometimes progressed from simple retellings to more elaborate reflections on the text as they continued to talk. The act of discussing the text or film encouraged students to transact in increasingly sophisticated ways. The researchers appeal for teachers to provide

opportunities for students to talk--to themselves, to each other, or to teachers who genuinely want to know what they think. A lot of groping goes on during this talking and again seems necessary to provide for quick flashes of personal understanding that come suddenly and quickly during informal, open discussions. (p.32)

The opportunity for children to move to deeper, critical reader response (May, 1995), then, seems highly dependent on students' chances to converse about what they read (Cox & Many, 1992; Guice, 1995; Sipe, 1997).

Culture and Reader Response

Why is more research needed? Although wide reader response research has been conducted with secondary students, and previous researchers have questioned the influence of age on children's responses (Applebee, 1978; Beach & Brunetti, 1976; Squire, 1964), few researchers show the influence of *culture* on the responses of primary-grade children in a natural setting (Martinez and Roser, 1991). Reading is an active experience, and the reader brings to the text a number of experiences, expectations, and purposes (Rosenblatt, 1969) which bear on the meaning of the

"poem" (or aesthetic experience) constructed. Rosenblatt has challenged educators to be concerned about "reading as an event in a particular cultural and life situation" (1969, p.46). Purves, Rogers, and Soter (1990) have similarly argued that a shared culture helps readers leave a text with similar impressions, but readers differ in how they individually express those impressions. Differences in the cultural backgrounds of readers can only lead to a further spread in the individual ways readers approach and transact with literature. Unfortunately, with a few exceptions, the concerns of these researchers with regard to culture and response have not been translated into empirical studies.

In the last eight years, researchers have conducted limited ethnographic research to determine the effect of ethnicity and culture on children's responses to literature. Fry (1994) and Enciso (1994) studied children's reactions to literature in which the characters were of different cultural backgrounds from the readers. These studies were designed to examine how such literature affects the cultural sensitivities of children--how the children later feel about other cultural groups' members. The White first graders in Macphee's (1997) study showed evidence of new empathetic cultural understandings as they read about characters suffering from racial discrimination. Enciso's (1997) work clearly represents the potential of multicultural literature to foster discussion among children as they negotiate new understandings of race and ethnicity. Children involved in her discussions about Spinelli's (1990) *Maniac Magee* latched onto familiar cultural metaphors to ground their discussions. She notes,

as we mediate this [multicultural] literature with children, it is critical that we recognize that we are not simply responding to these stories as if they are creations of a singular imagination. In the midst of discussions, children borrow and often 'talk back' to constructions of difference found in literature, popular culture, and the words of their classmates and teachers. (p.36)

She also cautions that many of these discussions of difference might not occur in an environment in which the teachers and students are reluctant to question the "images and ideology inscribed within" books (p.36).

The role of multicultural literature in promoting students' cultural sensitivities toward members of other cultural groups has been inconclusive. Two studies have demonstrated traditional, control group designs to evaluate the effect of multicultural literature on students' sensitivities (e.g., Kerr, 1996; Wham, Barnhart, & Cook, 1996). The researchers report increased (or steady) tolerance and sensitivity of children in the groups exposed to multicultural literature on a regular basis. In a naturalistic study, Myrick (1996) found that African American college students' perspectives toward their own racial identities changed after they engaged with Afrocentric texts. She notes the students who successfully engaged with texts found the literature meaningful, and she concluded that the use of African-centered texts could foster the development of critical literacy abilities in students of African descent.

Wason-Ellam (1997), however, showed that inundating girls with stories showing strong, heroic, non-stereotypical female characters could not change the girls' preconceived, socially-constructed notions of what it meant to be female. Instead, Wason-Ellam explains

Young readers don't merely absorb the values of a story, even if those values are progressive, feminist values and of ultimate advantage to them. Children's readings, based on their own cultural and social experiences, may be quite different from their teachers', leading students to *read* progressive texts in less-than-progressive ways. (p. 436, italics in original)

Although Wason-Ellam deals with gender, rather than ethnicity, in this study, her report validates the comments of May (1995) who notes that "literature can open up new horizons for readers, but it cannot be used as a tool to change attitudes" (p.160).

Other studies show that readers do not respond differently to a text based on the match between their own ethnicities and the characters' ethnicities (Altieri, 1993; Towell, Schulz, & Demetrulias, 1997). These researchers looked to the characteristics of the readers for answers to questions about the effects of ethnicity in response to literature. Altieri (1993) found that third-grade African American, White, and Hispanic students "engaged" equally in African American stories (i.e. stories with African American protagonists). She analyzed writing samples acquired after classroom teachers read-aloud each of six books used in the study. The teachers in three participating classes had been instructed to read the stories without comment and without stimulating social interaction, and students were then directed to "write anything you want to about the story" (Altieri, 1993, pp.238-39). This method of eliciting responses is similar to Hickman's (1983) "say anything you wish" (p.10) prompt for eliciting free oral responses to literature. Hickman, however, used the free response as only one among many methods for data collection. Altieri's based her analysis exclusively on the writing samples she later assessed against categories of aesthetic quality and content. She did not analyze any natural, oral discourse regarding the texts. Furthermore, her method for assessing the ethnicity of the study participants depended solely on school record evaluations of children's ethnic identity rather than measures grounded in the children's own perceptions of that identity (Altieri, 1996). Findings from other studies suggest families' self-identified ethnicities may not correspond to the identities they record on school records (Schofield & Anderson, 1987). Altieri (1993) did find, however, that ethnic minority students preferred books portraying characters of their own ethnic background. Although I find Altieri's work useful, her reports are not grounded in children's and their families' senses of ethnic identity, and the research settings did not represent the natural classroom environment.

In another study of culture and literary response, Trousdale and Everett (1994) recorded the responses of three African American female children to rewritten versions of three children's stories. Everett rewrote original works of children's literature with the goal of making the three stories "similar in topic and tone" (p.5). The researchers read aloud the redrafted works to the three students in non-school setting--a researcher's living room--and asked the girls to retell the stories afterward. However, the stories featured exclusively male protagonists even though Everett had written the stories with the stated intention that the African American female participants would identify most closely with the story protagonists. Two of the three students did not, in fact, identify with the male protagonists. Results suggested that children's reactions to literature are tied in complex ways to their cultural (and, perhaps, gendered) backgrounds. This descriptive study lacks many of the elements necessary to answer my research questions. The three female students do not represent the population of African American children in schools today. First, the sample was all-female. Second, the researchers chose only students whose parents were literate and highly involved in their children's school lives. Finally, like Altieri's method, this literature-sharing setting did not resemble the natural classroom environment, so children's spontaneous responses could not be observed over time or in a social context mirroring that of school.

In order to assess the influence of ethnicity on reader response, researchers need to examine the responses of children from varying ethnic and cultural backgrounds (students who represent the populations of our schools); they need to examine those verbal, written, and kinesthetic responses in real classroom settings and contexts (i.e. teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction); and they need to use authentic works of literature as the stimuli. Furthermore, researchers

should evaluate the social setting in which these responses take place. To ignore the social context of response is to miss a great deal of the total picture.

Most of the naturalistic, classroom research available which systematically examines the interactive relationship between elementary school students' ethnicities and their responses to literature addresses children in upper elementary grades. Tavenner (1993) observed a group of fourth grade students to determine if European American and African American students responded differently to books depending on the ethnicity of the books' characters. Results indicated the strongest cultural influence among African American students, who tended to respond positively to books with African American protagonists. African American students also tended to adopt a more effertent stance toward texts than their European American counterparts.

Smith (1993; 1997) also examined the literary responses of upper-elementary African American students. In her naturalistic study, she employed observation, interview, discourse analysis, and artifact examination to identify how urban African American students were responding to literature. She noted a number of students' culturally specific responses to African American literature, including "body punctuation" (1997, p.127)--the physical responses of students--to accompany the use of Black English in conversations surrounding the text. Lin (1995), too, detected culturally driven responses to literature among American and Chinese children reading picturebooks of Chinese folktales, suggesting that the phenomena of culturally linked response is not unique to any single cultural or ethnic group.

The two studies which come closest to approaching the goals of the current study, however, also do not address young children. In her study of fourth graders completing a literature unit on the writings of African American author, Mildred D. Taylor, Desai (1997) examined the influence of the classroom interpretive community upon the responses of students--in addition to examining students' memberships in

other, multiple cultural communities. A unique component of her study was her examination of how the literary transaction, within and as a part of the interpretive community, could influence developing ethnic and cultural understandings.

Spears-Bunton's (1990) work in an eleventh-grade English classroom with poor and working-class African American and European American, honor students highlights the potential for lost literacy among students whose cultures are too severely detached from the literature they encounter in school. For six months, Spears-Bunton collected ethnographic data in this classroom, using both classroom observation and teacher and student interviews as methods for data collection. The teacher participant in this study introduced the novel *The House of Dies Drear* (Hamilton, 1968) to a class of bright, but resistant readers. Earlier in the year, students had resisted the teacher's efforts to include more traditional works (e.g., *The Scarlet Letter*) but had appeared to resonate with literature portraying the African American experience. The use of Hamilton's novel instilled in students an uncharacteristic desire to read further and caused the teacher to transform her curriculum. As a result, the teacher adapted her instruction to emphasize response over rote learning activities, such as memorizing vocabulary words. She created an environment for sustained small and large group discussions, written response, and critical examination of the cultural content of the text.

Spears-Bunton reminds us that deeper engagement with the text--critical engagement--can facilitate higher levels of literacy among students, but the experience of questioning and reflecting on the literary work, particularly from an aesthetic stance, can help facilitate the development of intercultural understandings among students. The teacher's "introduction of African American literature into her curriculum invited individual and group confrontation on difficult issues of race, sex, and class; yet, importantly, students crossed perceptual, gender and cultural lines as

they engaged with the world of the text" (p.573). The "us"/"them" dichotomy blurred, allowing students to more easily identify with the "other," fostering new ethnic and cultural understandings. This study is, perhaps, the closest I can find to what I attempted to do in my investigation--observe children of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds share and respond to group-shared writing and children's literature, sometimes multicultural literature, within what I had hoped would be a response-supporting interpretive community.

I perceive two gaps in the currently available research on reader response and readers' cultural backgrounds. First, I see no research which explores the role and consequences of the interpretive community mediating how those responses are delivered within the context of the classroom. Second, I see that most of the research on ethnicity and response demonstrates one or more of the following: It has been completed in a non-naturalistic manner, has focused on how multicultural literature changes children's feelings about out-group members but has ignored the influence of ethnicity on the raw response, or does not have ethnicity as a co-focus for examining and understanding response.

Writing Workshop and Group-Shared Writing

In many classrooms where teachers are implementing literature-based reading curricula, teachers are simultaneously developing process-oriented writing programs (Atwell, 1987; Bird, 1989; Calkins, 1994; Dyson, 1993; Edelsky, 1991; Graves, 1995; Hansen, 1987; Harwayne, 1992). The philosophy guiding this curricular organization is that reading and writing are active and interdependent processes, and they are best learned in a context-supportive environment (Goodman, 1986; Newman, 1985; Tierney & Pearson, 1983). Lindfors (1987/1991) suggests the process of learning written language is similar to the process of acquiring oral language. In particular, she

contends that the contextual support given to children learning to speak is also necessary as children build another (written) expression system (see also Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984). Many children learn to speak in environments where what is said logically relates to the situation, in which their premature efforts at talk are received by caregivers as meaningful communication, and in which they have many opportunities to use unconventional (as measured against adult standards) language in social situations without being penalized for providing only approximations of adult-like language. Therefore, many researchers of writing development appeal for similar circumstances--response, contextual support, a respect for development over time, and authenticity--as children develop as writers. The writing workshop design supports children's writing development by providing choice over writing topics and genre, time for extended thinking and rethinking what one has written, response from real audiences, and a focus on writing as developmental in nature.

Therefore, when teachers implement writing workshops, children engage in daily (or, at least, frequent) opportunities for first draft writing, chances to talk about their writing with others, and time for "publishing" what they have written (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1995). Peers provide support for writers through conferring and an event called "group share," during which a student might be seated in an "author's chair" or stand in some place of significance as she reads her writing aloud. Following the reading, classmates have an opportunity to ask the author/reader questions about the shared writing. These sessions help writers develop a sense of audience as they write, making the writing a purposeful activity and guiding the child through the process of anticipating a reader's needs (Dyson, 1993; Graves, 1995). Dyson (1993) suggests that children will sometimes use their writing and this "share" time to reach out to or marginalize peers.

Calkins (1994) has described the share session as a time to "share and support work in progress, but there is another purpose. Share sessions function as public, teacher-supported conferences. By participating in them, students learn how to confer with each other in one-to-one conferences" (p.190). They also serve as an opportunity for students to have their communicative efforts received by caring others as meaningful communication. Graves (1995) cautions that children, in group-shared writing sessions, frequently engage in formulaic responses to the child-author. He criticizes the use of "I like" comments, formulaic questions such as, "How did you get your idea?" and undifferentiated clapping after the reading. Instead, he contends students should receive real, authentic responses to their work. He explains the purposes of sharing in the following ways.

- Young children literally need to see the effects of their texts on the faces of their classmates.
- Children in the audience need practice listening and repeating the texts of readers; in this way they gain "reading" experience in maintaining an understanding of the parts and whole of a text.
- Authors need to find out what audiences do and do not understand in their texts.
- Authors need to experience the joy of joint participation in a well-read text. (p.145)

Studies of the sharing experience suggest that children must be taught the process of peer response (e.g., Graves, 1995) and that both teachers and students will probably measure the worth of the shared writing against their preconceived notions of what makes "good" writing (Fleming, 1995). Because girls' and boys' writing interests and styles differ, the responses children receive from classmates often differ according to the gender of the child responding. Teachers take an active role as they model the process of response and often reinforce students' patriarchal notions of what makes a good story.

Each teacher implements the writing workshop in a way matching her own philosophy and understandings about how learning happens (Dyson, 1993; Edelsky, 1991). Teachers also implement the workshop under the institutional constraints of time, access to resources, and administrative philosophy (Giroux, 1987). Therefore, the definitions of "writing workshop" are as plentiful as are the teachers who claim to implement it. The kinds of roles teachers take in these workshops differ widely, with some teachers serving as facilitators in the background and others assuming stronger control of the event as stance initiators, controllers of speaking turns, and interrogators.

Dyson (1993) also explains that "the imaginative universe of process writing assumes a participation structure in which individual children communicate with an audience of teachers and peers" (p.203). Indeed, the participation structure does not seem to equally embrace the values or cultures of all members of the classroom community. The discussion that occurs during group-shared writing times sometimes follows the initiate-respond-evaluate (IRE) sequence described by Cazden (1988) or the initiate-respond-feedback (IRF) sequence of Edwards and Mercer (1987). This sequence, the traditional model of classroom discussion, is problematic for teachers who explicitly hope to establish open classrooms for inquiry and shared meaning building since, as Edwards and Mercer (1987) explain

there is, within educational ideology, a tension between the notions of education as a 'drawing out' of the potential and ability of children, and, on the other hand, a requirement to inculcate pupils into a pre-existing culture of educated knowledge, thought and practice. (p.40)

In particular, they note that teachers often *do* have an agenda for the content and form of children's responses, and the child's task often becomes one of negotiating her own understanding of content *and* the ways the teacher hopes she will participate in the classroom dialogue. For students whose cultures differ significantly from the culture

of the teacher, this negotiation of how to participate can become a difficult (and sometimes insurmountable) hurdle.

Critical Theory and Multicultural Education

The lens of critical theory helps researchers, teachers, and students examine how education is used to empower or disempower particular cultural, gender, linguistic, or socio-economic groups. Critical theorists also ask many questions concerning whose perspectives are valued in educational practices, curricular materials, and the languages thorough which teaching and learning are mediated (May, 1995). Gay (1995) suggests critical pedagogy and multicultural education are closely related. In the current study, the critical questions I ask are informed by my commitment to multicultural education. Despite the appeals of critical theorists who have challenged researchers to do more than critique (see Giroux & McLaren, 1992), the current study does not transform practice. Rather, I focus on what *happened* in a classroom during one year and *question* how these events did or did not lead students to become empowered. I conducted my study in a manner consistent with Banks' (1998) appeal for caring, compassionate researchers who demonstrate a commitment to improving the experiences of minority group members. As a result of my analysis, I hope to be able to take action in further studies. In this section I will provide an overview of multicultural education and critical theory.

Definitions of Multicultural Education

Banks (1996) explains that the term multicultural education suggests many meanings to different groups of educators but that researchers seem to be able to agree on a few broad goals of multicultural education. His general definition identifies multicultural education as "a broad interdisciplinary field that focuses on a range of racial, ethnic, and cultural groups as well as both genders" (p.31). A leading figure in

the field, Banks has defined it as "at least three things: an idea or concept, an educational reform movement, and a process" (Banks, 1993, p.3) with four dimensions: content integration, the knowledge construction process, an equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture. These four dimensions should work as part of an interdependent system focused on the promotion of more equitable opportunities for students to learn in schools.

Banks is not the only researcher to propose frameworks for conceptualizing multicultural education. Banks' (1994) description of approaches to multicultural education--contributions, additive, transformation, and social action--somewhat parallel those of other researchers, such as Sleeter and Grant (1994). Sleeter and Grant (1994) have developed a useful framework for discussing how multicultural education has been interpreted by different groups (including teachers, researchers, and school administrators). I will summarize the aims of the different "approaches" below.

1. **Teaching the Exceptional or Culturally Different.** This approach focuses on helping members of "different" groups to fit into the mainstream. A goal is to facilitate assimilation. It is generally a deficit-remediation orientation toward teaching and learning.
2. **Human Relations.** This approach is an outgrowth of the Intergroup Education movement and focuses on the reduction of prejudice by providing students with accurate information about marginalized groups and countering stereotypes. This approach is similar to a "tolerance" curriculum.
3. **Single-Group Studies.** This approach mirrors, to an extent, the "contributions" approach mentioned by Banks (1993). Teachers and schools with this orientation are eager to "include" some marginalized groups in the curriculum (e.g., supplementing the canon) in an effort to help students increase their awareness about particular groups and (possibly) how they have been marginalized by dominant groups.
4. **Multicultural Education.** The aim of this orientation is to improve society and help support cultural pluralism and structural equality through

reforming schools. Multicultural education is focused on improving the circumstances of humanity rather than individual groups. Banks supports this perspective in much of what he writes.

5. Education that is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist. The goal of this approach mirrors that of multicultural education but also includes social action for social reconstruction. Classrooms with teachers who advocate multicultural education that is social reconstructionist would exhibit democracy in-progress and critical evaluation of students' own life circumstances. Power would be shared between teacher and students.

Generic definitions of multicultural education include talk of dispelling stereotypes by providing accurate information about marginalized groups, increasing students' abilities to cooperate and collaborate, including culturally sensitive teaching practices (e.g., high-context activities and materials for students of more field-dependent cultural backgrounds), and drawing upon the diverse strengths and backgrounds of the multicultural student population as a positive resource. Other generic aims of multicultural education include maintaining high expectations of all students (Bartolome, 1994; Hopkins, 1997), getting to know students' communities (Gollnick & Chinn, 1990; Hopkins, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994) and developing empathy and the ability to see alternative perspectives (Chilcoat & Ligon, 1994). It has also been suggested that the above practices can happen only in classroom environments in which trust is established between members of the learning community and in which learning happens within the context of genuine relationships (Bateson, 1994; Goodman, 1992; Greene, 1988; Rose, 1989).

Other writers define multicultural education more conservatively. For instance, Bennett (1995) explains, "the focus of multicultural education [in her book] is on cultural perspectives . . . rather than on different social classes" or on issues of disability or "alternative lifestyles such as gay and lesbian lifestyles" (p.15). She defends her choice of focus by explaining, "Multicultural education is the one area that

focuses on diversity issues related to race and culture. If this becomes *overextended*, it is likely to lose its power in these areas" (p.16, emphasis mine).

Several of the writers who address multicultural education align themselves with multicultural education social reconstructionists (e.g., Sleeter & Grant, 1994; Villegas, 1991). These researchers tend to agree with the broad and generic tenets of multicultural education but also believe that social action and critical engagement with life and learning are the methods for beginning to promote a more just and equitable society. Limiting the conversation to only those issues addressed by researchers such as Bennett would prevent sufficient reduction of prejudice and discrimination. They find that social reconstruction cannot happen only within the walls of the classroom and must extend into a reconstruction of the communities (local and global) within which children and adults live (Edelsky, 1994; Gay, 1995). Such an approach suggests that we must learn new ways to think, question, and imagine. A social reconstruction approach generally supports the use of multicultural education for the purposes of "helping kids to look at reality differently" (Banks, 1994, p.28), examining the nature of knowledge and how it gets constructed (Banks, 1993; Giroux & McLaren, 1992; Greene, 1988; Kutz & Roskelly, 1991; Perry & Fraser, 1993), entering the critical conversation, and taking social action to improve the life circumstances of all human beings. Such goals tend to focus on reducing the marginalization that occurs as a result of cultural hegemony and supporting the promotion of critical democracy by developing the voices and critical abilities of both the oppressed and privileged (or dominant *and* non-dominant group members). Social reconstructionist approaches to multicultural education tend to value connection over individuality (Goodman, 1992; Greene, 1988) and encourage the power of making the familiar strange--"to question whatever had been taken as common sense" (Bateson, 1994, p.169)--and to problematize the everyday (Liston & Zeichner, 1991).

Social reconstructionists aim to prepare citizens to actively support cultural pluralism and social equity (Sleeter & Grant, 1994) and to "[change] the environmental, cognitive, and pedagogical contexts in which teaching and learning occur" (Gay, 1995, p. 160). Gay argues that the tenets of multicultural education and critical pedagogy have much in common. Both, she explains, are grounded in a "focus on social critique, community of political struggle, and the real location of power through access to knowledge" (p. 164). Finally, social reconstruction presumes that all students will learn to critically examine their own life conditions (Bartolome, 1994; Britzman, 1993; Sleeter & Grant, 1988; Wood, 1992) and seek ways for improving their own circumstances *as well as* the circumstances of others. Accomplishing this requires teachers to learn to share power with students (Bartolome, 1994; Giroux & McLaren, 1992; Greigo-Jones, 1996; Shor, 1992) and redefine power relationships.

History and Origins of Multicultural Education

The current multicultural education movement grows out of two major movements in the earlier parts of this century (Banks, 1996). The earliest movement was the "African American Studies" movement, led primarily by Black scholars interested in issues of race and equity. These scholars were often forced to work within the existing paradigms of scholarly discourse in order to produce research which would challenge the grain. DuBois, who was an activist and an early leader in the movement, was characterized not only as a scholar who produced traditional scholarship but also as a promoter of social equity. Most scholars, in order to be taken seriously and not be perceived as harboring political intentions, engaged in Delpit's (1992) image of "cheating"; they used the dominant group's tools of objectivity and science in order to provide accurate information about African

Americans and dispel stereotypes. The period of greatest emphasis on African American scholarship spans from the 1880s to the 1970s.

Another movement from earlier in this century is linked with some varieties of multicultural education. In response to a number of race "crises" in the 1940s and 1950s, White, liberal academics proposed what came to be called "Intergroup Education." This movement aimed to help support shared understandings, tolerance for others, and the preservation of a presumably "shared national culture" (Banks, 1996, p.37). Much like the Human Relations approach as defined by Sleeter and Grant (1994), the Intergroup Education supporters worked to support society as it existed rather than focusing on reconstruction.

It is in this way that the two approaches above differ. The African American Studies movement supported new ways of uplifting the "people" and imagining new possibilities for society--a more just and equitable society. The Intergroup Movement, however, mainly confronted discord in order to pull the members of society back into line with proper roles as they were, at that time, conceptualized.

The Intergroup Education movement died out rather rapidly, although its residue remains in some teachers' ideas about how multicultural education might apply in their own schools and classrooms. In 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education* helped marginalized students to, for the first time, create a different vision of how their lives *could* be. It was followed by a more radical movement--the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. It seems that the movements led primarily by members of oppressed groups are the ones with the most socially reconstructionist agenda. The relative success of the Civil Rights movement, in turn, paved the way for members of marginalized ethnic groups to demand equitable treatment (Perry and Fraser, 1993) in addition to groups marginalized on the basis of gender, disability, social class, or sexual orientation (Kolodny, 1985; McLean, 1997; Smith, 1994).

The current political climate has been characterized as one of great public conservatism (Edelsky, 1991), although Young (1997) thinks we are moving back into a period in which the general public is becoming committed to social equity, volunteerism, and justice. Political conservatives are vocal, and they perceive social mobility as largely the result of individual achievement. Although more colleges and universities are creating somewhat more inclusive reading lists, Perry and Fraser (1993) contend that these concessions (e.g., expanding the canon) are insufficient for the purposes of multicultural education that is social reconstructionist. Rather, they contend "we are asking that this country's definition of democracy be expanded. We are asking for a redefinition of the normative; we are asking that our social and cultural institutions be redefined" (p. 11).

Defining Multicultural Education as Critical Pedagogy

Multicultural education can be defined within a critical perspective as the process of working toward a more just and free society with critical members who can both envision alternate realities *and* find ways to act meaningfully in support of social justice. Multicultural education includes the "ecstasy" Schutz (1976) mentions when discussing looking beyond one's own reality. I believe an understanding of relevance structures (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), even in a very elementary fashion, is essential to the development of empathy, perspective-taking abilities, and real connections with diverse communities. My definition of multicultural education, like Banks', includes the re-envisionment of the curriculum, the development of a supportive school structure, and the promotion of a more equitable society. My definition of culture (since, after all, multicultural education's meaning is dependent upon how we perceive this term, says Bullivant, 1993) is broad in scope, including race, language, social class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical "ableness," and geographical

region. To isolate any part of "culture" as being more significant in the fight against stereotyping and discrimination would be to ignore some of the most overlooked kinds of forces named in the disempowerment of a number of groups in society. I also believe that multicultural education cannot survive in a context devoid of connectedness and caring (Noddings, 1988).

Schools are not the equalizers many parents hope they will be. Students from marginalized groups still receive unequal access to resources in schools, and this unfair discrimination continues in institutionally-supported ways when students leave school. Rose (1989) and Grant and Sleeter (1988) demonstrate how members of ethnic minority groups are denied access to appropriate school and career guidance and high expectations in schools. West (1993), Fordham (1988), and Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), teach us that race *does* indeed matter in issues of educational and social access. Kozol (1991), Ortiz (1988), and Anyon (1980) define some of the ways in which the resources lower class students receive fail to prepare them for the gatekeepers of society. Finally, as McLean (1997) and Greene (1993) demonstrate, access to information about one's cultural group (or at least one of the groups of which one is a member) is unequally distributed for gays and lesbians. Numerous times, we have observed the skipping over of women in history, and the need for more gender equity in and out of schools has been explored for some time (e.g., Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Campbell & Lam, 1993; French, 1992; Greene, 1988; Hannan, 1995; Pipher, 1994; Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Tetrault, 1993).

A reconstructionist approach with a focus on multiple realities and visions for the future holds the potential to help researchers begin addressing such pervasive inequities. Giroux and McLaren (1992) suggest

for students this means teaching them to read texts as language constructed through the ordering of particular codes which name and legitimate reality and

social identities in specific ways. Students need to learn to read not as a process of submission to the authority of the text but as a dialectical process of understanding, criticizing, and transforming. (p.19)

I use this same critical spirit in examining what happens in schools. Rather than submit to tradition or ease, I wonder--often--how those who view schools can uncover how the taken-for-granted disadvantages some children.

Issues and Concerns about Multicultural Education

Critics of multicultural education note a number of issues concerning the integration of multicultural education's principles into the classrooms of our country. A number of critics have argued that multicultural education will facilitate the destruction of the American "melting pot" and that Americans will lose their common cultural heritage (Hirsch, 1987). Others have argued that the "heritages" presented to schoolchildren as their histories are often named by the privileged and that no truly common cultural heritage exists for *all* Americans. Instead, large numbers of individuals from marginalized groups have been forced to assimilate to the norms of an institution grounded in assimilationist values and practices.

A multicultural perspective or curriculum is insufficient to correct all of the problems that are the sources of inequitable power relations in society. However, schools can be places for the elimination of institutionalized, disempowering practices. As Ladson-Billings (1992) explains,

Multicultural education cannot substitute for institutional responses to racism, sexism, and other forms of systematic injustice and discrimination . . . [and] does not absolve a school (or other institution) of the responsibility to address admission, hiring, staffing, and promotion practices that systematically discriminate against people based on their race, class, gender, or physical condition. (p.310)

Researchers associated with multicultural education also risk being defined as relativists (Nieto, 1995). By "enhancing identity, increasing awareness of difference, we are genuinely playing with fire, for the resurgence of repressed nationalities can

destroy societies and almost any kind of difference can provide a basis for discrimination or exploitation" (Bateson, 1994, p.171). Nieto (1995) suggests that multicultural education has been the subject of criticism from both the right and the left and that explicit pursuit of critical pedagogy is a dangerous (but necessary) enterprise.

A significant issue concerning multicultural education involves the understandings of teachers who are members of the dominant social group. The privileged are often "culture bound,"--a dangerous thought when we sense that "complacency works against curiosity" (p.167). Conservative public schools (and school teachers) are remarkably slow to include members of ethnic minority groups or women as central figures in the curriculum (Applebee, 1991; Hannan, 1995). Given the demographic make up of the preservice teacher population, teacher educators are faced with helping a mostly white, female, middle-class group of students become committed to principles of which they may be unaware or even resistant (McCall, 1995). Zeichner (1993) refers to this as a preparation for "cultural diversity" by which he refers to "differences related to social class, ethnicity, culture, and language" (p.1). Many teacher educators are working to deconstruct white privilege in preservice teachers in order to help make them aware of the life circumstances of their future students, large numbers of whom will be from "non-mainstream" groups. This challenge is made even more difficult when the preservice teachers expect to return to their home communities and teach primarily white, middle-class, suburban students (Liston & Zeichner, 1990).

Sleeter (1995) suggests that preservice teachers frequently view discrimination as isolated acts perpetrated by individuals and are often ill-informed regarding the historical contexts of race relations in our country. Indeed, college students do find discussing issues of race very uncomfortable (Tatum, 1992). To develop the ability to

question and see multiple perspectives, practicing and preservice teachers should come to know their own cultures so that they may develop a consciousness of "White Privilege" (McIntosh, 1992). Such a transformation would require teachers (and future teachers) to develop social commitments which might run counter to the values of their particular schools or to their social groups.

A number of "misconceptions" (Marshall, 1990, p.19) regarding multicultural education must also be addressed before most teachers can begin making steps toward reinventing (Kutz & Roskelly, 1991) their practice. In order to develop a critical approach, Giroux (1987) argues that teachers will need to do more than respect the individualities of students using progressive practices such as the reading and writing workshops. Instead, teachers need an understanding of "how texts, classroom relations, teacher talk, and other aspects of the formal and hidden curricula of schooling often function to actively silence students" (p.177). I have undertaken the current study, in part, to examine some of the parts of the hidden curriculum Giroux identifies.

Finally, I offer Young's (1997) perspective on multicultural education. He sums up nicely the range of connotations of "multiculturalism" for university professors and instructors (though not necessarily those in colleges of education or departments of multicultural education). He notes, "For some people, multiculturalism means that no shared values are defensible; for others it means a chance to assert the supremacy of their own values. For most, multiculturalism means increased sensitivity to people they had not thought about before and a concomitant uncertainty about their own values"(pp.6-7). I suggest this uncertainty about the inherent rightness of our "sacred cows" (Nieto, 1995, p.208) in education can be helpful in ensuring our commitment to critical examinations of practice.

Summary

Research on children's responses to literature is ample (Spiegel, 1998). However, little research specifically addresses the roles ethnicity might play in young children's natural responses to literature and group-shared writing. Part of the reason for the dearth of research is the difficulty in defining and measuring ethnicity, especially for young children. As I have noted, a few researchers have embarked on this charge but have claimed to compare response against ethnicity without sufficiently defining a child's ethnicity. Another impediment to the kinds of studies I seek is the negotiation of what constitutes a "response." Reader response theorists differ in the methods they use for researching response and what they perceive to be "response" (e.g., drawing as the result of prompts, responding to story mapping, choosing books, oral comments in book discussions.) I also argue that the responses children exhibit during read-alouds of classmates' writing, called "group-shared writing" in this study, are worthy of investigation when the following conditions apply: (1) the participant structure for response is similar to or the same as the one for literature response, and (2) the child's read-aloud is given the same respect afforded true "literature." In the current study, I will examine those responses that are the result of a lived-through experience during a read-aloud of literature or group-shared writing as well as those responses that are "elicited contributions," namely those responses that "fell into the familiar and pervasive IRF structure, where pupils' contributions were directly constrained by teachers' questions, and by the normal requirements on any answer to a question--that it should be relevant, appropriate, informative, and so on" (Edwards & Mercer, 1987). Most of these responses, spontaneous and elicited, are oral, kinesthetic, or written. Both Rosenblatt and theorists in social construction of reality suggest that socialization and cultural background can influence one's sense of self as a member of a cultural group. I argue this background schema is then used to help

interpret the social world, including what one reads. Rosenblatt's literary "transaction" occurs when the reader brings to the reading background perspectives and beliefs and then, through the process of reading, comes to reinterpret those beliefs and perspectives. It is a reciprocal transaction, highly unique to the individual reader and his or her circumstances at the time of reading. I will call the observable reactions to the transaction "reader responses." It is these mediated responses to literature and group-shared writing that I will examine to determine the nature of the relationship between ethnicity and reader response as it is demonstrated in an ethnically diverse, multi-age classroom setting. Furthermore, I will describe and analyze the context within which ethnically diverse children make those responses visible and question the ways in which those responses are received by others in the community. Through that questioning, I hope to find answers to how ethnically diverse groups of children experience response to literature and group-shared writing.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

In this study, I attempt to describe (1) children's observable responses to read-alouds and classmates' group-shared writing within one ethnically diverse classroom setting, (2) the nature of the participating children's ethnic identifications, and (3) the relationships among response, ethnicity, and the interpretive community in which response occurs. These are exceptionally difficult phenomena to describe and analyze. Therefore, I pulled from the work of other researchers in the field in order to build my methodology. In this chapter, I will identify the benefits of qualitative research, and ethnographic methods specifically, as the design for this study. Next, I will explain how I identified and described responses, ethnicities, and the interpretive community of the classroom. Finally, I will explain how I used participant observation (recording of fieldnotes), interview (audiorecorded and transcribed, when possible), artifact collection, and research journaling (Merriam, 1991; Spradley, 1980; Zaharlick & Green, 1991) in my methodology.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is often used when, in order to answer the research questions, the researcher must be involved in sustained interaction with the people who are the focus of the research (Kirk & Miller, 1986). In the present study, the phenomena of interest were highly dependent upon factors unique to the particular situation (i.e., interactions between human beings within the classroom as well as nonquantifiable, unrepeatable events). As explained by Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz

(1992), "literacy is grounded in actions and reactions to the daily use of language" (p.174) and can not be separated from the natural context in which it is used. In fact, that is the criticism Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz deliver to some literacy researchers who attempt positivistic studies when more qualitative investigations would more accurately demonstrate the social interactions which sustain literacy.

Qualitative methodology grows from the perspective that the phenomenon of curiosity is "highly subjective [and] in need of interpreting rather than measuring" (Merriam, 1991, p.17). Merriam has described several distinguishing characteristics of qualitative research, each of which suit this study.

1. Research questions are concerned with process rather than outcomes or products.
2. Research interests are concerned about the *meaning* of phenomena or of people's experiences.
3. Data are collected primarily through the human researcher (via observation, interview, and journaling, for instance, and are interpreted through the researcher)
4. Fieldwork is a key to the methodology of qualitative research, placing the researcher in the middle of the natural setting to collect data.
5. Because of the emphasis on meaning in qualitative research, the findings are described rather than quantified.
6. The data must be analyzed inductively rather than deductively; theory must grow out of the data rather than the theory simply being confirmed or refuted by data. (p.19).

In my research, I describe the dynamics of children's responses and ethnic identities and pull out relationships in a *particular* situation with *particular* individuals in order to build understanding. Bloome and Bailey (1992) identify the focus on individuals as a change in the focus of some literacy research. They note how new methodologies are reflective of a new emphasis on building understanding at the

micro-level before attempting to seek "universals" (p.182) which may be inappropriate given the nature of language and human communication.

The Methods of Ethnography

In order to learn about the relationship between children's responses and ethnicities within an ethnically diverse setting, I chose to use qualitative methods, borrowing specifically from the methods of ethnography. Ethnography can best be described as "the work of describing a culture" (Spradley, 1980, p.3). Ethnographic methods focus on the meanings driving the actions of members of the culture in question. The "culture" being examined was, at one level, the culture of the classroom during literacy events. At another level, this study was concerned with the cultural knowledge brought to those literacy events by the participants (Zaharlick & Green, 1991). Ethnographic investigation, then, progresses in a cycle unlike some linear types of research; it must be more flexible to accommodate the researcher's developing understandings of meanings from the perspectives of the participants. Instead, ethnographic investigations generally move in cycles, and analysis occurs throughout the study, informing the next "cycle" of the study. Often, the preliminary analyses will influence the nature of the questions, the focus of the observations, and the scope of interviews in the next research cycle (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Spradley, 1980).

Ethnographic methods are also especially appropriate in situations where the data to be sorted are qualitative in nature and when the questions asked will lead one to explore phenomena about which not much is already known (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 19). The classroom, in particular, is appropriate for ethnographic investigation since it is a social setting in which a mini-culture develops and is sustained by the implicit or explicit understandings of the participants. Literacy events in literature-rich classrooms are particularly complex, since they are built around not

only the classroom culture but are also influenced by the cultures of the individual participants in interaction with one another.

Case Study

A case study focuses attention on what Merriam (1991) calls a "bounded system." Case study can be classified as "an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group" (p.9). The researcher generally must move into the natural setting and gather enough data to compile thick description about the phenomenon in question (Geertz, 1973). Yin (1989) suggested that the case study represents a useful method when "examining contemporary events, but when the relevant behaviors [of the participants] cannot be manipulated" (p.19). In this study, my goal was to observe the behaviors of the participants within a natural setting.

Researchers have sometimes criticized the case study as being too narrow in focus to be useful as a scholarly research activity (e.g., Campbell & Stanley, 1963). That is, the findings from case studies are not readily generalizable to other populations because of the unique characteristics of the study participants or study situation and because of the importance of context on the findings. Donmoyer (1993) and Shofield (1990) argue that researchers should not necessarily apply traditional concepts of generalizability to all qualitative and/or case study research. Instead, they argue our terminology should instead be reconsidered in light of the unique aims of the qualitative researcher.

Case study research, according to Donmoyer (1990, 1993), offers a reader "vicarious experiences" which allow the reader to develop new schemata as he or she learns about the phenomenon researched. If we conceive of "generalizability" as a psychological phenomenon which "occurs through experience in the world with

different individuals and different situations" (1993, p.44), then case study research, as a way to produce learning opportunities for the reader, becomes useful in an untraditional research sense--perhaps in a more literary tradition. Donmoyer draws upon psychological "schema theory" in describing three benefits case study as a research design offers that direct experience in the setting cannot: (1) Case studies can take us to places where many would never have an opportunity to go; (2) case studies allow the story to be told through the researcher's perspective and illuminate that which might otherwise go unnoticed; and (3) case studies offer protection against the defensiveness of a reader and thus reduce resistance to learning (1990, pp.193-196).

Schofield (1990) finds generalizability in case study research to be less about the ease in replication of the findings--external validity--and more about the internal validity of the study. That is, did the study provide a detailed, consistent study of the situation? If so, then other researchers may be able to examine collection and analysis techniques to evaluate the comparability of one study with another. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) have called this "comparability" and "translatability" (qtd. in Shofield, 1990, p.208). Huchinson (1990) explains that the development of grounded theory is less about ease in replication of findings and more about developing "a new perspective on a given situation that can then be tested by other research methods" (p.132).

I chose to design a multiple case study because I planned to study potential relationships between ethnicities and responses. Children's ethnic identifications and understandings must be described at length, qualitatively, and, therefore, are very hard to describe for large numbers of students in a classroom. Furthermore, response is a challenge to observe in the naturalistic setting. Although I looked across a whole classroom community for the involvement of all students in forming one level of interpretive community, I could carefully follow and document the responses of only a

few students at a time. Rather than determining a child's ethnicity using only parent records and catching mere glimpses of any individual student's responses, I chose to study a few students in greater depth, learning as much as possible about how a few very different children responded to read-alouds and group-shared writing (McCracken, 1988). Their differences aided me in developing the comparative perspective helpful in developing theory (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Twenty students participated in this study. I followed five focus-study students within the classroom where I conducted my research. I selected these students from among the African American students in the class, and I attempted to develop a sample that lent itself to comparisons across age, socioeconomic levels, and achievement levels. The small size of the classroom and the small number of potential focus study students, however, made this impossible. In an effort to modify and preserve the integrity of the study, I waited until after preliminary data analysis to select two final students (from my five focus-study participants) to represent two very different kinds of participation in the responsive community of readers. While both of the case study participants are poor, African American children who are academically talented and live in two-parent homes, their ethnicities and individual differences make read-aloud events different experiences for them. While I observed the five broader focus-study students (Travis, David, Leon, Latresa, and Precious), I continued to observe the responses of the classroom group, for the responses of the focus study children were clearly tied to activities and language of the classroom community. My attentions were focused especially on Precious and Leon, the two students whose experiences are represented in this study. I chose African American students as my target population because ethnic descriptions of the students in this group reflect differences among students who, by external criteria only, might appear to belong to a single group with similar ethnic and cultural values and beliefs.

Methods to Collect Data on Children's Responses

I documented children's observable responses to read-alouds and group-shared writing through observation, interview, and artifact collection. Although response is highly internal, other researchers interested in reader response have successfully used observation and interview to document evidence of response in classrooms (e.g., Carlisle, 1988; Desai, 1997; Hickman, 1981; Lin, 1995; Spears-Bunton, 1990). I used Hickman's methods as a guide for my own, despite the slightly differing purposes of our studies. Hickman, seeking to learn how students responded, in general, needed to look across many students to view a broad array of responses. Her research, and the literature of others who have built upon her work, lead me to know, going into this study, something about how children were likely to respond. Instead, I wanted to know how those particular responses might be linked to ethnic identities. Therefore, I felt that I could use her methods of observation and interview to describe the responses of the study participants while choosing to limit the number of intensive case study participants. In this way, I could more fully explore the potential relationships between ethnicities and responses.

The classroom teacher also served as an informant on particular children's responses. I asked her to share with me which books she shared with her class on days I was not present. I also collected from the teacher brief anecdotal accounts of particular children's responses to special books and examples of children's social interactions. Meeting with the teacher during school days was an obstacle, mostly because she and I had such busy schedules and because of the hectic nature of the school day. Therefore, I felt that we did not talk as often *during* the study as I would have liked, although she was generous in speaking with me by phone, by appointment,

and whenever feasible during the school day. She made taking time for the study a priority.

I recorded my observations of children's responses to read-alouds and group-shared writing in transcripts of classroom conversations and events. Initially, I recorded my notes by hand during classroom visits to prevent intimidating Mrs. Tyler, the intern who was new to the setting and whose teaching had never before been so intensely observed. Shortly after beginning visits, however, I began recording my observations directly onto my laptop computer. Transcripts of both the handwritten notes and the word-processing notes were soon fleshed out with the help of (1) fresh memory and/or (2) audiorecordings. One month after initiating the study, I began audiorecording read-alouds, group-shared writing events, and show-and-tell periods. I did this in response to (1) my own frustration at reconstructing lengthy transcripts of dialogue and (2) Mrs. Smith's suggestion that I might have not recorded some student comments accurately. I transcribed the tapes along with observational data I wrote during the observations. I collected a total of 47 observation protocols. The students would sometimes try to type on the laptop or hit the monitor, so I decided not to take the laptop for every visit. Since the children did not perceive me as an authority, I was unable to prevent the laptop distraction. These episodes generally occurred during a transition time or when the teacher was otherwise engaged. She was unaware of the dilemma, and I did not tell her about it until after I completed data collection. I wanted to remain true to my role as a nonauthority, and to "tell" on students would have stripped me of the trust the students and I had developed. I also worried that the computer distraction manipulated the environment. The resulting transcripts, then, grew out of both hand-written and computer-recorded notetaking.

Methods to Collect Data on Ethnic Identification and Cultural Background

I encountered several (not unexpected) methodological dilemmas in this study. In order to draw connections between ethnicity and the literary responses of children, I had to be able to define each child's perception of her own ethnicity. As Aboud (1987) notes, children's degrees of ethnic identification with particular groups can be difficult to measure for instrument-based and subject-based reasons (see earlier discussion). Joanne Golden (1995) advocates the use of alternative methods for examining the multiple contexts for, and influences upon, literary response.

Toward that goal, I used several methods to determine the ethnicities of children in this study. First, I accessed parent reports of children's ethnicities, as reported to the school for formal record-keeping (Altieri, 1996). I assumed that the parents' public identification with an ethnic group may have influenced the primary group socialization of the participating children. I recorded a child's ethnicity only after I confirmed the parents' reports twice, on at least two separate documents in the file. I did not rely solely on this method, however, since parents' indications might have differed from school records (Ogbu, 1974). Second, after my last classroom observation, I arranged to interview, in their homes or at their places of employment, the families of students selected as focus-study participants in order to gain parental perspectives on their children's developing ethnicities and to begin developing ethnic profiles on the students and families consistent with the framework described by Slonim (1991). Finally, I recorded and analyzed all references to ethnicity that children made spontaneously during the observations.

I did not ask such young children (approximately five to eight years old) to label their ethnicities because there is little inter-cultural standardization of ethnicity-identification instruments and because of the vulnerable ages of children in the primary grades. However, Holmes (1995) was able to collect data on perceptions of race and

ethnicity from kindergarten children using participant observation, informal interview, and artifact data collection. Frequently, informal discussions among children turned "ethnic," and I took advantage of every opportunity to listen to children talk about skin tones, out-of-school activities, and playmate patterns. I rigorously collected and analyzed all such classroom data related to children's perspectives of cultural or ethnic identities and groupings. These data included how students grouped socially, how children talked about and drew themselves, how they responded to ethnically identifiable characters in texts, and how they spoke about cultural issues. I found rich descriptions of the individual participants' ethnicities more useful than simple defining characteristics (e.g., school records) in determining the role of culture in literary transactions.

To describe the ethnicities of participating children, I drew from the work of Slonim (1991), who developed a qualitative framework for assessing culture and ethnicity. I found the qualitative framework useful because ethnic identification may connect with other cultural variables, such as socio-economic status, family structure, and religious beliefs, which may have as strong an influence on a child's relevance structures as any explicit ethnic identification examined narrowly. Therefore, I developed an ethnic and cultural profile of each of my focus-study participants on the basis of information obtained from the children (directly and indirectly) as well as from the children's families. I interviewed families about the following components of Slonim's framework:

Name Significance

Country of Origin

Migration History

Residence/Neighborhood

Household Composition and Structure

Family Life Cycle Stage

Language and Communication Style

Educational Status

Religious Affiliation

Parenting Practices and Family Values

Role and Status of Women and Value of Children

Socioeconomic Status and Occupation (pp. 62-81).

I added questions dealing with the following topics: family rituals, reading rituals, educational material use, the family's definition of their ethnicity, and preferred pseudonym for the child. I added to this profile related information I obtained from observations during the home visit and school day. This store of information about each student served as an aid in the analysis of response data as I interpreted potentially culturally unique responses.

I chose ethnicity, rather than race, as a focus of the study since I concur with Holmes (1995) that the concept of race has "no utility" due to the "arbitrary and imprecise nature of the existing biological and cultural definitions of race" (p.4) and find that the term ethnicity is more suggestive of the cultural values of a particular group than race, which indicates little more than skin color. I do, however, wish to fully acknowledge the reality of race in its consequences on the lives of members of marginalized groups (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; McIntosh, 1992; West, 1993), and I will use race as a factor in the analysis of one section of this report. I pulled my case study participants from the African American children in the classroom in order to problematize concepts of race and to see race's interaction with ethnicity.

Collecting Data on the Classroom Interpretive Community

Finally, to describe the involvement of the interpretive classroom community, I documented, in fieldnote form, as much of the context for children's responses as possible given my preoccupation with particular focus-study students. Such data included the participation of the teacher (noted as particularly important in studies of response) and other students. When verbatim transcription was not possible, I summarized the words of other classroom participants. I often summarized after informal conversations with Mrs. Smith.

Karolides (1997) explains that the interpretive community sharing response to literature "weave[s] an interpretive tapestry, the weaving occurring within each individual as well as the group" (p.24). As such, the consensus which is sometimes reached in some literature discussions is neither the individuals' nor the group's alone; it is the result of dynamic interaction between members of the community of responders. In order to ask the often-cited "What's going on here?" question (Wolcott, 1990b, p.32), I needed to know much about the context of individual responses, particularly those which grew out of conversations regarding read-alouds and group-shared writing. Language is social in nature (Bruner, 1986; Gee, 1989; Giroux & McLaren, 1992), and the ways language is used in the classroom carry cultural meanings. As Gee (1989) notes, schools are sites in which multiple Discourses are present, and the relative value placed on those Discourses by society often privileges middle-class, mainstream discourses. My classroom observations of the interpretive community helped me evaluate discourse as an agent of cultural understanding.

Setting

Selection of the Site

In this study, I concentrated attention on the ways in which children responded to read-alouds and group-shared writing in a natural setting. I studied a single classroom to rule out the possibility that the findings would be complicated by a teacher-related variable, particularly since the influence of the teacher has been recognized as significant in the promotion or silencing of response. In order to research what would occur in the natural setting, the choice of research site was made on a number of criteria which I felt would facilitate an unobtrusive study (Spradley, 1980).

This study took place in a primary grade, multi-age classroom in a public elementary school. The classroom teacher, who I will call "Mrs. Smith," was in her fourth year of participation in teaching a multi-age program designed by the three multi-age teachers in her school. My study occurred in my third academic year of research on these classrooms. This particular setting lent itself to this research project in four ways. First, the teacher maintained an "open" classroom and made the environment welcoming to outside adults as well as other students. Children were accustomed to visits from outsiders, particularly researchers, and all but the new kindergartners already knew me well. Therefore, ethnographic methods (e.g. notetaking, audiorecording, interviewing) were not likely to disrupt the normal flow of activities. Second, the highly reflective teacher (as demonstrated by her professional readings, graduate course attendance, and enthusiastic participation in reflective conversations with me) had developed a literature-based reading and writing program which made writing central to children's literacy development. Therefore, I knew the presence of literature and opportunities for response would be evident throughout the classroom and throughout all times of day. Also, this curricular design assured me the

opportunity to observe students interacting with literature (consulted independently, heard when read by the teacher, read cooperatively, and so forth) and discussing group-shared writing. Third, the student population of this school represented the ethnic diversity of the local community, so students of diverse backgrounds could be chosen for the study. Fourth, this was a setting in which I had been granted enthusiastic access. I could observe for full days and over an extended period of time. The teacher and her nearby colleagues welcomed me and this research project. A final, and related, criteria for the selection of this site concerned the relationship I had developed with the participants prior to this study. Before the study began, I had been in this classroom for a year and a half studying writing and multi-age education. I had developed the "good rapport over a long period of time" with both the teacher and the students; such relationships help a sensitive researcher ensure the validity of a study (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p.32). My prior time in the setting also had allowed me to confirm that the criteria established in the professional literature as being supportive of response to literature were being met (e.g., respect for diverse opinions, encouraging of risk-taking, ample supply of literature, interactive supports) (Cox, 1997).

During the year that I conducted the study, however, the school administration required teachers to use a scripted phonics program with the students, and the scheduling of this program (because support staff circulated to assist with the reading groups) was school-imposed. As a result, the block of time the teachers had set aside for writing workshop and literature groups was cut short--leaving Friendship Program teachers with little time for literature groups. This scheduling change was made after I began the study. Therefore, although I initially chose the classroom because of the teacher's response-supportive practices during literature time, the practices described in this study reflect a teacher working within a prescribed schedule to try to "fit in" literature rather than using it as a central part of her curriculum.

Description of the Site

The school site was situated in a middle-class section of a university town in the Southeastern United States. The building had been constructed almost thirty years earlier and was designed, originally, to promote an open atmosphere. Each grade level was housed in a pod, four classrooms surrounding an indoor common area known to the teachers and children as the "centrium." Teachers shared and used this area for large-group meetings and parent volunteer work with children. Sliding partitions divided many of the classrooms from one another. Since there were no "doors" to separate the classroom from the common area, I could see directly into the common area while I was in the classroom and was able to walk between classrooms freely if I needed to follow children. This organization was somewhat different from that used by other teachers in the school since most other teachers maintained traditional, individual classrooms (re-constructed, with the use of the movable partitions) permitting little or no between-class movement of children or adults. The physical organization of the targeted classroom allowed me to enter the classroom unobtrusively and granted me "central" space in which I could interview students or work on other, research-related tasks (e.g., fleshing out fresh fieldnotes after children left for their "special" activities and examining student writing samples).

The school served an ethnically and economically diverse group of children from preschool through the fifth grade. Approximately 48 percent of students in the school were enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program. According to school records, the student population (as of May, 1997) was 40% Black, 54% White, 4% Hispanic, 1% Native American, and 8% Multi-racial. These statistics were gathered via information provided to the school by parents and guardians during student registration. The teacher population was significantly less ethnically diverse, however,

with 85% White teachers, 12% Black teachers, and 3% Hispanic teachers. Both the teacher and the graduate intern who participated in my study were White. Students in this school tended to score higher than their district counterparts on achievement tests. In the first year the Iowa Test of Basic Skills was administered, students in this school scored 10% higher than the district average on the Reading portion and scored 12% higher than the district average on the Math portion of the test. The average score of fourth graders on the annual state Writing Assessment (1995-96) was higher than both the district and state averages.

Participants

Study participants included 20 students from the 23 students enrolled in one of the multi-age, primary grade (K-2) classrooms. The demographic makeup of this class was, by design of the school administration, reflective of the communities from which this school pulled its students, even though parents of children in these classrooms were required to consent to their children's participation in the experimental multi-age program. As a result, students of poverty from nearby low-income housing as well as the children of affluent, professional parents attended the multi-age Friendship Program (FP) classes. Students in Mrs. Smith's class were African American, White, and Biracial.

All children enrolled in this multi-age classroom were invited to participate. Because some parents chose not to consent to their children's participation, I did not collect data on those students. However, occasional comments from nonparticipants appear in the transcripts, summarized rather than directly quoted, with no clue to the child's identity. I will refer to the children who make these contextual comments "nonparticipants" throughout this paper. With the assistance of the classroom teacher, I initially selected for my case studies five focus children from among the those

identified by the school as African American. The children were selected to establish purposeful contrasts among the students in order to look at student comparisons (McCracken, 1988). Therefore, at the time of selection, I chose five focus-study students according to school-recorded ethnicities of the children, the ages of the children, and the academic achievement of the children, varying among these student characteristics. I then narrowed my list to only two case study students, choosing those students who best represented similarities in the areas of social class, academic achievement, and family structure but demonstrated diverse experiences and ethnic identification. I did not consider including, as these intensive case studies, students who left the classroom frequently for extra curricular instruction.

I found it important, however, to have the maximum number of children participate in the broader study in order to fully assess the influence of social interaction between children when responding to read-alouds and group-shared writing. In this way, fewer comments from nonparticipants would need to be eliminated from the discourse transcripts. A larger participant sample assisted in the development of a "comparative perspective" (Zaharlick and Green, 1991, p.207) in examining and analyzing the data as well as analyzing the "silent chorus" left out of other studies of classroom literacy interactions (Purves, 1995, p.327). Furthermore, Desai (1997) notes the influence of the interpretive community of the classroom as children transact with text. Children represented approximately a three year age span since the children were enrolled in kindergarten, first, and second grade.

Mrs. Smith had experience teaching single grade, primary classes and working collaboratively with other teachers to design curricula. In 1993, she and two of her colleagues became interested in multi-age instruction and began to read professional books and attend conferences on the topic. They designed a developmental, literature-based-kindergarten-through-second-grade literacy program, gained the permission of

the principal for implementation, and began implementation the following (1994-1995) year. The teachers had been granted special permission to implement this literacy program which did not include an otherwise-mandated basal reading series or a new "PowerWriting" program. They were required to implement a mandatory "Reading Mastery" phonics program for the first time during the academic year of this study (1997-1998). The teachers were committed to the use of the reading and writing workshops (Atwell, 1987; Avery, 1993; Calkins, 1994).

It is possible that the children in my focus classroom may have sensed that their program was special and somehow have demonstrated behaviors unrepresentative of children in the rest of the school. All parents of children in the multi-age rooms granted permission for their children to be in an experimental program. If the children were in single-age classes in the school, however, they would have been exposed primarily to the basal-reading series. Little observation of responses to read-alouds and group-shared writing would have been possible since the teachers would have had little opportunity to engage children in literature daily. The school administration's systematic efforts to provide a random sample of the school population in these classrooms and the children's lack of exposure (since these were the first years of formal schooling) to alternative classroom situations (i.e., it would be difficult for them to realize that their program was different from others') probably minimized the treatment effect, particularly for the youngest students.

Gaining Access

Before I proposed this study, Mrs. Smith had already met with me and informally agreed to participate in my study. I then followed conventional procedures for gaining formal access to this school. First, I sought and received approval from the University of Florida's Human Subjects Committee to conduct this study. Once this

approval was granted, I described my study to the principal of the target school and requested his informal permission to carry out my study in Mrs. Smith's classroom. Next, I submitted my application to the school's district office for permission to conduct my research in the targeted school with the targeted teacher; the principal granted formal, written permission for the study during this process. Finally, the process of obtaining informed consent from the study participants began as I requested the written consent of the teacher and parents. Once granted parental permission, I used an oral assent to gain consent of children whose parents had agreed for them to participate. I also discussed my study with the graduate intern placed in Mrs. Smith's classroom. She appeared interested in the issues I was studying and agreed to also participate in the study, for which I was grateful since she did most of the teaching during the first three months of the study. My study would have been impossible without her willingness to allow me to research her practice. No data were gathered on any person who chose not to participate in the study. I found it hard to make sense of the data without notes explaining the rest of the actions in the classroom. Therefore, I did make notes of the general context when nonparticipants were involved in exchanges, but nonparticipants are not directly quoted or identified in this report. At the conclusion of the informed consent-gaining process, I commenced the study.

Gaining access to some families of children presented a challenge. I sent informed consent requests home with children in their weekly folders. The return rate was, initially, very slow. I found, however, that parents were generally positive when I described the study to them over the phone or in person. I also discovered that the text-laden document was confusing or intimidating for some parents. Other parents reported being too busy to read the letter. The teacher worked with me to help inform parents about the objectives of the study and how I would collect data. She talked to

parents when they came to the school for play performances or to pick up their children, and she reminded them to read and sign the informed consent document to either grant or deny permission to study their children.

Procedure

I knew that children would be responding to read-alouds and group-shared writing at various times of the day (in addition to the more obvious periods just after writing workshop or during readings of literature), so I arranged to be in the school setting for most of the school day, three days per week. I planned to loosely model my time in the setting after the organization of Hickman (1981). At the onset of the study, I arranged to visit the school on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. I also occasionally supervised student teachers in other local schools on those days, so my time in the setting was not always the same. In January, my teaching schedule shifted, so I then arranged to be at the school on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. On the primary days for intensive data collection, I was in the classroom for varying periods of time, including those times of day designated for reading and group-shared writing experiences. I also observed at times of day not designated by the teacher as reading time since children's responses are often evident at unpredictable times. I wanted to develop a basis for comparing some of the reading-time and group-shared writing time behaviors I observed with students' behaviors during other times of day. I attempted to be in the classroom for most of the school day, when possible, working around my own difficult teaching and intern supervision schedule. By the end of the study, I had formally spent 47 days in the classroom over a period of 19 weeks--for an average of two and one half days per week. I also visited the classroom briefly from time to time for connecting with the classroom teacher, to borrow student journals, or just to check in with participants. The observations resulted in 599 single-spaced pages of data

from observations and interviews plus a file drawer full of copies of students' writing. I observed 44 read-alouds by the teachers, conducted two read-alouds in the small groups of focus students, and noted five read-alouds to all the FP children during African American Read-In Week. I also observed several readings done by either Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Tyler as they worked with the "Reading Mastery" group, but I did not analyze the resulting conversations because of the high proportion of nonparticipants in the group and the infrequency of the readings. Included in my fieldnotes are the observations from 29 group-shared writing sessions, including 154 individual group-shares by students and one collaborative effort shared by Lisa and Mary.

Ethnographic methods required that I use multiple means to begin to build understandings about the participants in the study and the phenomena of interest *from the perspectives of the participants*. Three main forms of data are characteristic of case study: observations, interviews, and documents (Merriam, 1991). I used all three forms of data in this study. I documented my research schedule, my wonderings, and other thoughts-during-the-process in a research journal updated regularly (Spradley, 1980).

Data Collection

Observations. I took extensive fieldnotes during the school day, making note of any and all events which seemed related to children's responses to read-alouds and group-shared writing, and to ethnicity. Observations were initially broad as I learned about the setting, making "grand tour" observations of the setting and participants. As the study progressed, however, my observations became increasingly selective and focused, and my research questions were revisited and revised in light of new data (Spradley, 1980). The social nature of response demanded that I use a wide lens for observations, particularly at the beginning of the study, and include all twenty

participating children. I also developed and maintained transcripts of classroom conversations to learn more about the importance of social discourse between members of the classroom interpretive community in children's responses. I expanded and transcribed fieldnotes immediately following observations.

In order to document responses to read-alouds and group-shared writing, I also regularly audiorecorded the conversations between children, since I learned that class discussions were situations for which verbatim transcripts were difficult to develop by hand (e.g., when four or more children were involved in heated discussion). I tried to use the recording equipment unobtrusively and with the explicit, prior permission of the participants. That is, every child and both teachers knew I had a tape recorder, and I never hid the recorder. However, I frequently tried to handle the recorder so that my stopping and recording of the the tape would not make excessive noise or disrupt the class.

Interviews. I interviewed students and the teacher throughout the study. The degree to which children's observable responses to read-alouds and group-shared writing are influenced by non-observable participant conditions, dispositions, or attitudes necessitated the use of the interview. As Merriam (1991) explains, "Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them" (p.72).

First, I held informal, context-based interviews with children during normal classroom activities. Merriam (1991) calls these "open-ended, conversational" interviews. Questions I used included, "Can you tell me about that?" when a child was writing about a book she recently read, "What are you writing about?" (07/p.3) in order to gain more information on what a child was intending when I could not see a connection between the read-aloud and the written response, or "Why are you writing about that?" (12/p.1) in order to encourage a child to expand and clarify a response. I

used these occasions to ask a child about a particular piece of responsive writing about which I was curious, particularly when the piece was written during my absence. These interviews collected in-context talk about the process of response almost immediately. I also used these informal interviews to ask children to expand upon spontaneous statements related to ethnicity (Holmes, 1995).

I held two formal, semi-structured interviews with the case study participants, although I also used an interview-like setting, during "Explore Time," for a third meeting with children. These interviews were modeled after the interviews conducted by Applebee (1978) and Hickman (1983). In the first interview, I read a children's book to a small group of case study children. I wanted to know what their responses would be like in the absence of their White peers and with free permission to speak. Adapting Hickman's (1981) method, I told students, "When you think of something you want to say, you may go ahead and say it, but we have to make sure that we take turns talking," and invited any comments or questions they had. As I read the book (Grifalconi, 1993) aloud, I paused at the end of each page in case children wanted to respond. Children also occasionally interrupted the reading with a comment, and I allowed these comments as well. I sometimes followed a child's response by repeating the child's words to invite further talk or asking a student to clarify what he or she meant (e.g., "How do you know?" after a prediction or "What's that? What do you mean?") (32/pp.2,4). I recorded the group and individual responses during this reading. Following the reading, I invited individual case study children to talk into a tape recorder with using the statement, "Tell me what you think. Say anything you wish" (Hickman, 1983, adapted from p. 10). These responses also occurred in the presence of the rest of the small group and were later transcribed. Once we finished reading the book, I interviewed children about their post-reading responses. Questions grew out of the comments the children had made in the free response but

also included general questions such as, "Does that remind you of anything?" "Is there anything you want to tell me about this story?" "What did you think about the book?" and "Did you like the book?" Following these discussion openers, I used the same technique of pausing and repeating the students' words to foster the conversation. I repeated this book reading twice--doing it first with children during "Explore time" so that they were choosing to read with me as one of their explore activities, and once withdrawing them from class to complete a second interview. In these interviews, I used the books *First Pink Light* (Greenfield, 1991) and *Kinda Blue* (Grifalconi, 1993), both books with African American child protagonists--one male and one female. I also asked children to draw anything they wanted about the story; however, this method proved less fruitful than I had anticipated because children were restless by the time we reached the writing opportunity.

An excerpt from the book discussion during the reading of *First Pink Light* (Greenfield, 1991) demonstrates my technique. The focus group children were pondering what would happen next in the story. (In the story, a young child's father will return home in the early hours of the morning. The child tells his mother that he wants to stay up all night to surprise his father, but the mother protests.) I had just finished reading the second page and had paused for student comments.

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Leon: | He's staying up because his daddy's coming home? |
| Travis: | I think he wanna stay up so he could see his daddy, so he could see the first pink light. |
| Jeane: | So he could see the first pink light? Precious, you wanted to say something? |
| Precious: | Um, he's gonna be mad at his mamma and get a spanking. |
| Jeane: | He's gonna do what? |
| Precious: | Be bad. |
| Jeane: | Be bad? |
| Precious: | <i>Mad.</i> |

- Jeane: How did you know? (pause) Precious said he was gonna be mad and (Jeane turns the page to p.3) look at that picture. (The child in the illustration shows an angry face.)
- Leon: Yeah, he's mad because--she saw it on TV didn't she? [on Reading Rainbow.] And he got mad?
- Precious: Yep. (32/p.2)

Children were interviewed a second time, later in the study, about their literature-related writing. I gathered a portfolio of children's journal writings from the year and met individually with each of the focus study students. I asked each child about the content of the writing piece as well as the origin of each piece. Therefore, I have gathered not only *my* perceptions of which writing might be literature-related but also children's perceptions of which pieces were in response to (or were influenced by) the read-aloud and group-shared writing. When children identified a book link, they were asked questions about the origin of their interest in the book to which the writing was a response. They were also asked other open-ended questions about both the book and their own writing. I audiorecorded these interviews.

I also interviewed the parents of each case-study participant one time. I chose not to audiorecord the in-home interviews of the parents because my prior experience with this group of parents suggested that audiorecording distracts them and might change their responses. Unlike young children, for whom the tape recorder quickly loses its novelty because it is in the setting for an extended period of time, the one-shot experience with the tape recorder tends to make parents--especially those parents who are least likely to visit the school or who are from ethnic minority backgrounds--nervous (Copenhaver, Fu study interview notes, 1997). I quickly expanded upon my parent interview notes to collect part of the ethnicity profile data for each student. I usually found a park where I could sit briefly following parent interviews to fill in the gaps in my notes. I designed my interview questions in conjunction with the Slonim (1991) framework.

Interviews with the teacher were almost always brief, and they were generally context-dependent. These conversations helped me gain the teacher's perspectives on students' responses to read-alouds and group-shared writing. I also initially presented the teacher with segments of my fieldnotes and asked for her interpretation of the scene. Multiple-perspective analysis helped (1) me know what the teacher was attempting to do in the interpretive community and (2) me check my own first explanation attempts against the teacher's perceptions. I also asked the teacher questions about the participants, how she chose readings, and her goals for literature discussions.

McCracken (1988) suggests researchers design interview questionnaires prior to the interviews. The interview guide ensures that (1) the interviewer covers the same material in the same order for all interview participants, (2) prompts can be designed ahead of time to manufacture social distance between the interviewer and interviewee, (3) the scope and sequence of the discourse can be established thoughtfully ahead of time, and (4) the interviewer is more able to pay attention to the discourse at the time of the interview rather than being preoccupied with the questions (p.24). McCracken also recommends the use of open-ended questioning, the conscious avoidance of "active listening" techniques, and the use of non-leading prompts for the respondent to expand upon what he or she has just said. One hopes that the participant will feel safe in articulating the often-unnoticed. To create a safe environment for the participant's comments, the interviewer should be minimally reactive, non-threatening, agreeable, and yet distant enough that the respondent does not feel pressure to please the interviewer. Prompts I used in the structured interviews for this study included repeating the last word used by teacher, student, or parent being interviewed, raising eyebrows in a questioning/surprised manner, and asking "What do you mean when you say that?" I found that I needed to repeat what the

parent had said in parent interviews because I was still in the process of writing down the response and needed to "buy time." This practice often led the parents to elaborate on their comments. The in-context interviews, however, occurred spontaneously, and I did not wish to manufacture any social distance during those discussions. Therefore, I conversed in a friendly, though inquisitive, manner.

Document collection. To evaluate the nature of written or artistic response to read-alouds and group-shared writing, I collected photocopies of student writing to examine for evidence of reading/writing connections. I generally borrowed the class set of journals at the end of a school day, photocopied them at a local office supply store, and returned the journals the following morning before the children began writing. I repeated this process approximately twice a month during the study. These materials served as additional sources of data for analysis and allowed me to begin the process of triangulation--examining the phenomenon from several different perspectives (i.e., observation, interview, physical evidence). The gathering of these data also helped me reconstruct some response events more completely, as well, during the time after observation when I began to compile my notes, my annotations of them, and the actual samples of student work (Dyson, 1993). They served as prompts in student interviews and often helped me decipher audiotapes of students' soft-spoken group-shared "readings" of their journal writing. I collected enough photocopies of student work to fill a portable file crate.

Research journal. At the conclusion of each research period, as I filled out and transcribed my fieldnotes and interview recordings, I took notes on my personal reactions to the events of the day, including my wonderings, my thoughts on how to more carefully focus my observations, and my revised questions to be asking of the data. My notes became the first step in my analysis procedures and helped me develop

the "theoretical sensitivity" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.41) that enabled me to make better sense of my data when I began intensive analysis.

Role

My participation in the setting could be described as passive to moderately-active. In order to discover the culture of the classroom and the meanings of the participants (Agar, 1986; Spradley, 1980), I tried to become someone with whom the children would feel comfortable talking, much like a classroom aide--a presence so familiar that it seemed to not even be noticed. This level of participation with the students and teacher can facilitate finding the meanings of domains in the participants' own words (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I tried, within reason, to preserve the integrity of the natural classroom context (including instruction and social interaction). In order to prevent disrupting the classroom environment, I maintained only that level of participation necessary to develop rapport with the classroom community. I seated myself at the level of the students, except during large group instruction, when I was seated at the back of the classroom, in a chair rather than on the floor. At all times, I attempted not to exhibit much reaction to classroom events. I had found this arrangement effective in my prior research projects in this classroom. As Dyson (1993) explains, students become accustomed to "friendly, minimally reactive adults" (p. 25) in the classroom, and this level of participation keeps the researcher in that safe space between intrusion and exclusion.

I felt comfortable in the classroom from the first day of the study. I already knew most of the children who had given me the identity of "writing lady" since I had studied their writing development during the prior years and because I was, indeed, always curious about what they were writing. Some of the children regularly brought

their writing to me for comment in the morning just as they had done while I worked on other projects.

I followed the advice of Holmes (1995) and Guice (1995) who chose not to assume authority roles in classrooms but rather to affiliate themselves with the children they studied. Therefore, it was no surprise to me that children sometimes disobeyed the teacher or violated school rules in front of me. Unless the safety of a child was at stake, I stayed out of disciplinary situations. I became conscious of how students perceived my role one day as the children conversed about gender. I was observing five children, who were sitting around a table, coloring paper angels when they began to talk.

David: My mom gonna have a baby (pretending the angel is his mom).

Tyler: She's at the hospital. (They look at their angels.)

Lauren and Kaley (at the same time): Girls rule, boys drool.

David: Girls slow.

Girls: (?unintelligible?)

David: Y'all better stop before I knock you out.

Lauren: I take karate. I used to be in karate.

David: So? I used to be in karate, too.

Lauren: Girls rule, boys drool.

David: I can run faster than you.

Tyler: Boys rule. Girls is the losers.

(Chris turns to me.)

Chris: Do you (Jeane) think that girls drool?

Before I can answer, Lauren repeats again "Girls rule..." and David smacks her hand with a pencil. It hurts but she says nothing and doesn't tell on him.

David: (Singing) Girls is a loser.

Lauren (to Jeane): Do girls drool?

Jeane: No.

David: Girls is the loser.

Lauren (to Jeane): See, they're messing with me. (And to the boys) My dad teaches karate.

Tyler: So? I could take him down.

Chris: Yeah.

Lauren: You can't really do that.

Tyler: Guess what? I punched an 8 year old in the face.

Lauren: If you boys call us a name again, I'll tell.

Chris: Cats! Oh, I called you a name. (giggles)
 David (to Lauren): Go tell on him.
 Lauren: I'm thinking about telling on you all. (28/pp.8-9)

To the children in the class, I was not an authority. They could ask me questions, but they did not perceive me as in charge of anything, particularly consequences. Therefore, they granted me greater access to their talk and play than they might have otherwise given a disciplinarian.

Researcher Bias

As the primary instrument of data collection, the researcher brings biases to the study. Qualitative methodologists insist that making one's own biases explicit is an ethical responsibility of the researchers. The personal involvement of the researcher in the project may create tensions because the qualitative researcher is both a human being and the filter through which all of the data and interpretation flow. Qualitative research is a subjective enterprise, regardless of how we seek to avoid subjectivity (see Peshkin, 1986; Roman, 1993; Wolcott, 1990a). If, in our studies, we attempt to integrate the importance of context into our analyses of phenomena, it is important that we make explicit our own commitments and biases and then monitor ourselves constantly--consciously--throughout the research process in order to keep this subjectivity in check.

I acknowledge a commitment to critical examinations of schools. Most of my earlier studies have investigated school practices which serve to reinforce the social disempowerment of ethnic-, language-, or gender-minority students. I identify myself with critical theorists, symbolic interactionists, and feminists. I entered into this study believing that (1) children of ethnic minority groups often exhibit behaviors that, although appropriate in children's home cultures, are not validated as "response" to read-alouds, (2) we live vicariously through the stories we read and so we are

therefore feeding small children information about the world even as they are developing ethnic identities, and (3) children in an interpretive community are part of a dynamic process of scaffolding meanings and creating "presentations of self" (Goffman, 1959) for others in the community.

One further limitation of my "lens" should be noted here. I am a White woman. Considerable debate has been published regarding a White person's ability to do justice to documenting and explaining the experiences of individuals who are members of another, particularly minority, group (e.g., Banks, 1998; Helms, 1993; Pedersen, 1993; Weinbaum, 1997). At times during this study, I was painfully aware of both my economic privilege relative to the families described in this study and my inadequate, previous exposure to students' values and cultures. When students I adored engaged in behaviors that I--when a child--would have perceived as "mean," I struggled between my "gut" reactions to how children treated other children and my researcher objectivity. I encountered this dilemma when children engaged in what I thought were "aggressive" behaviors and when I observed children being "exclusive" in their play groups, so I reacted (inwardly) in this way to most of the children in this class at one time or another during the study. The children whose experiences are most prevalent in my dissertation, however, are the African American students. Therefore, it is likely that my biases have seeped into my descriptions of them (more than my descriptions of the White students) and be evident as one reads this study. I view my own monocultural background as a disadvantage.

In order to minimize the effect my cultural background had on my study, I tried to find discrepant evidence to break or disprove emerging categories, particularly in the area of "ethnic differences" between students. For instance, although I initially thought that shyness in front of a group was an ethnic category (since the teacher had mentioned the noticeable decrease in volume and eye contact of African American

children when speaking before a group, and I had observed this myself), I looked for--and later found--discrepant evidence of this pattern. Latresa demonstrated no shyness, and yet she was clearly part of the group I was trying to describe. Despite my many efforts at avoiding the subjectivity of my Whiteness, however, I still qualify the report of the current study as a report by a White woman. I am forever grateful to the students in this study for helping me to begin examining reality from a new point-of-view; I have been enriched as a result of their teachings.

Researcher Qualifications

I felt qualified to carry out a qualitative study as demanding as this dissertation. I based this assertion on my experience in the following activities.

1. I independently carried out ten qualitative studies during the four and one-half years of full and part-time doctoral work immediately preceding work on this dissertation. My studies lasted from three weeks to as long as four months and involved the use of all four methods described above--observation, interview, document collection, and research journaling. Three studies addressed the consequences of ability grouping in elementary school reading instruction and in 12th grade English classes ("Skills" vs. "Advanced Placement"). Other studies addressed teacher expectations in classroom discourse, images of motherhood among three generations of women in a single family, remedial middle schoolers' experiences with the writing workshop, an on-line curriculum development project for preservice teachers, the use of on-line discussion in changing discourse patterns and control of knowledge in a language arts methods course, resistance to the development of critical pedagogy among teachers who publicly support "multicultural education," the experiences of a language-minority student in a public school social studies classroom,

and the functions of language exhibited by a three year old child. One study was completed as part of the requirements for a course in ethnography.

2. I worked as a research assistant to Dr. Danling Fu for three semesters and gained additional experience in designing a study, acquiring appropriate permissions to gain access to the school setting, and establishing collegial relationships with teachers involved in the study. My primary responsibility of gathering data in the field resulted in volumes of fieldnotes and hours of interview. It was in the process of carrying out Dr. Fu's study that I became acquainted with the setting and teachers chosen for participation in this study.

3. Prior to the onset of this study, I was admitted to doctoral candidacy in the Department of Instruction and Curriculum with an emphasis on language, literacy, and multicultural education after completing all coursework required for the degree Doctor of Philosophy.

Analysis

The goal of this study was to describe and begin building developing explanations of possible relationships between ethnicities and children's responses to read-alouds and group-shared writing. The procedures for beginning analysis began in the data collection stage of the study. The research journal provided a method for periodic reflecting, wondering, and rethinking. Electronic mail with my advisor, Linda Lamme, also helped me begin to see patterns in my data early in the study. These "venting" opportunities helped me learn more about what I was seeing as I wrote about it. Analyses of preliminary data suggested that I ask the following questions during the first cycle of collection/analysis:

What counts as response? How is it recognized?

Who is responding? To what are they responding?

What emerges from a comparison of responses?

In what kinds of prompting is the teacher engaging? Who responds to those?
 How do children move (where do they sit? how do they position themselves?)
 during group readings?

What student talk involves issues of ethnicity and culture?

I questioned the scene (although the above questions do not represent all of the items about which I was initially concerned), visited fieldnotes, and began developing a comparative perspective. As a result of these processes, I began sorting the data into categories (Wolcott, 1990b) and then analyzed relationships within and between categories. The results of new and revised questions led me to more focused observations and interviews with participants. For instance, once it was clear to me that the scope of my study would not be adequate for assessing the influence of the multicultural literature back upon the identities of the children, I focused my attention elsewhere. Another example is noticing an absence in my fieldnotes of how children talked about home lives; therefore, I adapted my practice to meet with children at lunchtime, observing and participating in their informal chats.

Theoretically sound analysis is dependent upon the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher; in order to preserve the integrity of my study, I regularly reflected upon and tested developing categories or domains. Many were refined in light of new evidence. I also practiced what I believe is the hardest work of the ethnographer--seeking negative examples of patterns which begin to emerge. I worked to remain skeptical about patterns reflected in the professional literature so that I did not impose categories of response on my data. The construction of grounded theory (which was an early focus of mine) demands that analysis and fieldwork work in a cyclical fashion, each part informing the other. I recorded memos of my thinking as I sorted and coded the data, using the memos (on notecards and as asides appended to the original fieldnotes) to inform my sorting of the data and my later interpretations of that data

(Huchinson, 1990). This process allowed me to document and capture otherwise fleeting, valuable thoughts and test my emerging beliefs about patterns.

I also had the benefit of reflecting upon my initial analyses as I presented my dissertation-in-progress at interviews for university teaching jobs. As I discussed my study with scholars around the country, I was forced to answer tough questions about the goals and methods of the study. I also learned helpful follow-up questions for future research projects. The dialogue with others helped me return to my data with new eyes and fresh questions.

I had approached this study with an awareness of how response in primary grade children had been interpreted by other researchers. I therefore knew, for example, that I would need to direct attention to the non-verbal responses of these children since response tends to become increasingly verbal with age. Beyond this, however, I attempted to minimize the potential for existing research to bias the direction of my analysis. Zaharlick and Green (1991) identify this suspension of knowledge about existing research as essential to the open-minded categorizing of phenomena but state that the literature does aid the researcher in entering the field with an educated design and questions. Others also caution against dependence on technical literature (e.g., Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.49) except in design and in stimulating questioning activities subsequent to coding, while Edwards and Mercer (1987) caution researchers to "suspend their own 'commonsense' interpretations of what is going on when making an analysis. . . . [A]void making the false assumption that what seems commonsensical to the researcher is seen in the same way by the participants" (p.15). As a result, the categories of response I developed are differently organized and conceived than those of some other researchers.

After the first level of analysis--or open coding--was completed, I began to reformulate the codes in axial coding so that I drew relationships between categories

and fit them into a "paradigm involving conditions, context, action/interactional strategies, and consequences" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.96). At this stage, I used the constant comparative method of asking questions and drawing parallels. For instance, at this stage, I revisited response domains to see which fit together (e.g., which categories would be subsets of "calling out") and which did not (e.g., spontaneous responses versus elicited responses). I followed patterns through the data to test relationships between phenomena and categories. At this stage, I used memos, diagrams, and maps to help me visually portray and document and test the validity of the developing theory. I had anticipated employing the functions of a qualitative data analysis program (such as HyperResearch or NUDIST) at some point during the analysis procedures, but because of time constraints and because of the value of "handling" the data daily, I changed my mind, using only a word processing program, photocopies, note cards, file folders, and many notebooks to help me manage my growing data collection.

CHAPTER 4

STUDY CONTEXT:

A DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL, TEACHER, AND STUDENTS

Introduction

In this chapter, I will describe the context in which this study took place. First, I will provide some background on the Pine Elementary School¹ and the evolution of the multi-age Friendship Program (FP). Next, I will describe the teacher, Mrs. Smith, the graduate student intern in her class, Mrs. Tyler, and the backgrounds of their students. Finally, I will explore the organization of what I call "school life" in Mrs. Smith's class, including the class's schedule and a brief introduction to the reading curriculum in her class.

Pine Elementary and the Friendship Program Classes

Pine Elementary, built in the days of the "open classroom," is a school of movable partitions and open spaces. This openness also extends to the administration of the school; four years ago, the principal of the school approved a plan for a group of three teachers to develop and teach three multi-age, primary grade classes called the Friendship Program. Long before I began the current study, other researchers and I had studied other literacy and multi-age issues in this setting. The principal had been eager to learn more about the benefits and roadblocks presented by multi-age classes, and our literacy research had been especially welcomed.

¹ Pine Elementary School is a pseudonym. I promised all participants identity confidentiality, so I use pseudonyms, rather than names, in this report. When possible, children's pseudonyms have been chosen by the parent.

Affluent and upper-middle class neighborhoods surround Pine Elementary. It is a school which, until newer schools were built in the area approximately nine years ago, represented one of the most desirable elementary schools in the district. Students at Pine Elementary live in neighborhoods adjacent to the school as well as low-income housing apartments across town, and the school is racially integrated. The principal of Pine Elementary has been particularly conscious of ensuring racial balance in the multi-age classrooms. The multi-age classes were carefully constructed so that the proportions of children from different racial and socio-economic groups represented the population of the school as a whole.

During the time I worked on my study, teachers in the school paid careful attention to the racial make up of the multi-age classrooms. In meetings I held with Mrs. Smith and her other multi-age colleagues, the teachers reported occasional jealousy from teachers in traditional classrooms. Other teachers reportedly believed that multi-age teachers had been given preferential treatment in economic support or the way children were chosen for the program. Some teachers thought multi-age students were part of an elite group. Despite the other teachers' perceptions, I never observed students making any similar comments. Mrs. Smith told me that, although children in the multi-age classes were there because their parents had consented for their children to be in the experimental program, it did not mean that the classes were substantially different in racial/academic make-up than classes with traditionally-registered students. The myth among non-Friendship Program colleagues continued, though. The Friendship Program did not receive any extra school-level funds for their activities; however, the teachers frequently collaborated to acquire grant money from outside sources to fund special projects, furthering the perceptions of outside colleagues that the program was somehow special.

Mrs. Smith and her other multi-age colleagues dealt not only with the minor political hardships of teachers who believed the Friendship Program was a pet project of the principal, but they also coped with the stigma of being whole language teachers in an environment unsupportive of process-oriented teaching philosophies. Mrs. Smith told me several times about the ways other teachers perceived process-oriented writing instruction. Teachers who received the Friendship Program's students in the third grade indicated that former FP students were poorly prepared in the area of writing. In order to foster a school-level understanding of process writing instruction, one of Mrs. Smith's FP colleagues asked me to present a teacher workshop on "Revision and Editing in the Writing Workshop." During this workshop, several of the non-Friendship Program teachers indicated that they had attempted the writer's workshop in their classes but that the approach did not fit the needs of their students. I also heard a number of teachers express a feeling of pressure to have children perform well on the fourth-grade "Florida Writes" examination. As a result, other teachers used scripted strategies for teaching writing and seemed driven by test scores. In the workshop, when Friendship Program teachers explained how skills and strategies could be incorporated into writing process instruction, other teachers debated them, sometimes passionately, and eventually Mrs. Smith and the other two teachers fell silent. This is only one example suggesting that the study teachers (primarily Mrs. Smith) worked with colleagues who disagreed with multi-age grouping and insisted that whole language instruction was "not teaching." (I verified that other teachers used scripted writing programs when I conducted research in non-Friendship Program classrooms one year earlier. I also found that the Friendship Program teachers were correct in their assessments of how other teachers perceived their writing program. Upper-grade teachers specifically mentioned to me the unique problems former Friendship Program children faced when writing in upper grades.)

The Friendship teachers, as a result of social isolation from colleagues, developed a school-within-a-school for their students. The centrium shared by the three teachers was dedicated to Friendship projects exclusively, so the teachers left the common centrium area open for frequent use by the Friendship teachers, students, and aides. In this area, I observed the classes engage in song and play rehearsals, group games, read-alouds, and visits with guest speakers. During such times, the children from the Friendship classes often mixed with one another, as students could choose where they wished to sit on the floor and often migrated toward friends or family members during Friendship activities.

The children in the Friendship Program developed close relationships with one another during the time that they were enrolled in the FP classes. Frequently, siblings were assigned to different classrooms within the Friendship Program and would have the chance to meet for group meetings, songtime, and recess. Two of the students in Mrs. Smith's class had siblings in neighboring classes. Multi-age classroom designs often are built upon an atmosphere like that of a family, with children of various ages interacting and assisting one another. Sibling-like relationships also emerged in Mrs. Smith's class among students who were not biologically related (e.g., the affection between David and a nonparticipant or the modeling of Lisa when teaching Devon how to write). The Friendship teachers believed that this family-like atmosphere would help students to feel comfortable taking risks and would provide the support necessary for children to achieve academically (e.g., older peer aiding younger peer helps both to work in zone of proximal development).

Mrs. Smith's Class

The Teacher and Intern

Mrs. Smith was an experienced early childhood teacher. She held an advanced degree and had a background in educational psychology. For more than twenty years

she taught kindergarten, and she demonstrated great sensitivity to the needs of younger students. She also spent time reflecting on her teaching and enthusiastically volunteered information on new developments in children's writing and response to literature. Many times when I entered her classroom, she had set aside examples of children's milestone journal entries for me to examine as part of this study. She also spent many hours in formal and informal interviews, providing information on her program, professional situation, and her students. She patiently answered questions during several telephone calls and helped me develop new and refined research questions. I consider her a co-researcher, although I do not know whether she considers herself a full participant in the research process. She reported enthusiasm for having me in the classroom. She explained that having someone to talk to about the happenings in the classroom was exciting and refreshing, and she felt like the strength of the multi-age environment would become apparent as articles on earlier studies were published. Mrs. Smith said it also helped her to have someone in the room to note what happened because day-to-day teaching happens so quickly that she found it impossible to note all events.

During the time I conducted this study, Mrs. Smith also supervised a graduate intern from a nearby university. The intern, Mrs. Tyler, taught in Mrs. Smith's class for approximately three months during my study and substituted or volunteered well beyond the duration of her internship experience. Mrs. Tyler consented to participate in this study and also commented on the progress of students in the class. Mrs. Tyler was completing requirements for a Master's Certification program for students with undergraduate degrees outside of education. She explained to me that she and many members of her cohort group planned to use their education degrees to teach only for a limited time. Most students planned to embark on careers in educational materials and/or software development. Mrs. Tyler had an easy, kind manner with students and

frequently shared books from her personal collection of up-to-date, hardback children's literature.

Both Mrs. Tyler and Mrs. Smith had access to the first two months of fieldnotes for this study. Mrs. Smith read the notes from the first few weeks of the study, making marginal notes to provide background knowledge on situations that were difficult for me to understand out of context. Her comments brought me up to date on what had been happening in the classroom prior to the onset of my study. She also clarified her intentions in her instructional choices and pointed out lapses in information. Her comments inspired me to routinely audiorecord the class to ensure the accuracy of my transcripts of classroom discussions. Mrs. Tyler also received a copy of notes beyond the first weeks, but I did not receive her written or oral feedback on the transcripts. She was certainly not an apathetic participant, but reported being too busy with teaching preparations to find time to comment on the notes. Indeed, she did appear to spend every spare moment on teaching preparations or her graduate school coursework. After the first two months, I believed the fieldnotes were reliable against teacher reports and no longer requested the teacher comments.

The Student Participants

Pine Elementary is situated in the middle of a primarily middle-to-upper-middle class neighborhood, although some of the students who lived in low-income housing areas were also close enough to walk to school daily. The classes were a mixture of low income, African American² children and middle-class children of professionals. Mrs. Smith's classroom was no exception. When I noted in an early observation that

² I use the term "African American" rather than "Black" because this was the term of preference among the parents of my case study students. I use "White" because none of the children ever used the term "European American."

children's play patterns and peer groupings were divided along racial and economic lines, she explained that children were playing with their neighborhood playmates, and their neighborhoods were clearly racially stratified.

I will split my discussion of the general situations of the student participants into lower income (African American) and higher income (White) categories, for I discovered that income exerted a strong influence on the opportunities of children to participate in cultural activities congruent with those of the school. I have broken the discussion of students into these two parts so the reader can first see the similarities in the lifestyles and opportunities of children on the basis of race before I begin identifying powerful ethnic differences later in the report. I also include a discussion of income in the opening descriptions of children because the economic disparities were personally striking to me.

The following chart identifies the participating children by gender, grade, and race. The abbreviation (A) following a pseudonym indicates the child is African American; (W) indicates White. Nonparticipants are noted as NP. Although no data on nonparticipants is directly used, I note their existence here so the fuller picture of the classroom can be acquired.

	Males	Females
Kindergarten	Chris (W) Leon (A) David (A) Tyler (W) Sam (W)	Shade (A) Kaley (W) Lauren (W)
First Grade	Devon (W) NP Billy (A)	Melinda (W) Precious (A) Latresa (A) Tiffany (A)

Second Grade

Mark (W)
 Travis (A)
 NP

Pat (W)
 Lisa (W)
 Mary (W)
 Karen (W)
 NP

Lower-income children. Children of poverty or low incomes were exclusively African American and lived in local low income housing apartment buildings or low income neighborhoods. One large complex was located close to the school, but another was situated across town. As Precious' mother told me, "My husband chose this place before I came back [from rehabilitation]. We hope to move out in a year or so" (5/23/98). Most of the poor parents involved in this study viewed their presence in low-income areas as temporary--simply as a place to live until they gathered enough money to move into a more safe location. Three of the mothers acknowledged that, by playing with neighborhood kids, their children might be exposed to values inconsistent with the values of their own families. In two of those cases, the mothers reported placing stringent regulations on where and with whom their children might play. Leon's mother explained her dilemma.

Well, he doesn't play with kids from here. He plays with his older brother. I take them to the park to play sometimes because this area's not that good. I keep them [her children] with me all the time. My mom said, 'You gotta let him out' and you know, you wanna let them out, but you don't want them to learn (nods toward the window of the apartment)." (5/22/98)

I found this cautious attitude consistent with other research I have conducted with parents in these neighborhoods (Copenhaver, 1996) and with the research of Clark (1983).

As I visited the homes of Precious, David, Travis, and Leon, I discovered that they had much in common despite their physical separation from one another. (I was not able to make an in-home visit with Latresa's mother, although I did visit her apartment building.) Precious and Latresa lived in a subsidized apartment complex

across town from the school. Parents who lived in this complex often described how careful they had to be in arranging visits to their children's school. In an earlier study, one mother reported needing to make advance arrangements with the children's grandmother to visit the school for special events. The physical distance also made communication between parents and teachers harder to sustain. Parents in this neighborhood sometimes had a distorted view of their children's academic progress, believed that the absence of contact with the school meant no problems were evident.

Upon my first phone call to Latresa's mother, I was greeted by a child who answered the phone. When I told the child I wanted to speak with Latresa's mother, I heard a child in the background remark, "Ooooh, what Latresa done now?" Precious' mother was similarly surprised that my call was prompted by my interest in her daughter's literacy. She was expecting disciplinary news. Other parents who were initially difficult to reach seemed pleased and surprised that I was not a disciplinary official with the school. I should note that Mrs. Smith made efforts to stay in touch with parents and welcomed contact with them, so I do not believe that parents' reticence was because they feared or disliked the teacher. In fact, both David's and Precious' mothers expressed unsolicited admiration for Mrs. Smith. All of the parents I contacted welcomed me into their homes or places of work for interviews, and demonstrated enthusiasm for their children's literacy development.

In these neighborhoods, I noticed the parking lots relatively empty, except for a few older model cars. Paint peeled off of the buildings, and several young men stood outside talking in the breezeways and stairwells. In Precious and Latresa's neighborhood, the buildings were replicas of one another, and they were identified by letter and then apartment number. Children played in a common area in view of apartments. The playground equipment was in disrepair, and dirt replaced grass in their neighborhood. Nevertheless, children were engaged in vibrant play every time I

visited any of the homes. Although I had been advised by the Friendship Program teachers to make my visits without any valuables on my person and to lock anything valuable in my car trunk before my arrival in the neighborhood, I never encountered any problems during my home visits. Precious' mother described her neighborhood as "like the ghetto" (5/23). Apartments were approximately 850 to 900 square feet (by my estimation), with modest bedrooms, combined kitchen/dining areas, and living rooms large enough only for a sofa and television. Tiffany, Latresa, Billy, and Precious lived in this neighborhood.

Leon lived in a similar complex just down the road from Pine Elementary. He lived with his mother, father, two brothers, and sister. When I visited his home, I noticed external similarities to the complex where Precious lived. Toddlers in diapers joyfully played outside on tricycle toys, while stairwells featured peeling paint and some missing apartment numbers. Some families placed potted plants in the stairwells to brighten the atmosphere. Leon's family had a little more space than Precious', as the larger living and dining areas were more clearly separated in his apartment. Still, his mother had hung curtains to block the view of the outside, and she kept her children inside with her most of the time. Parents from this apartment complex (which I will call Pine Acres) had easier access to the elementary school, however, since it was within walking distance. This area was known locally (by both outsiders and the children who lived there) for drug-related crime. Leon and Shade lived in this complex.

Surrounding Pine Acres was a community of small, low-cost rental homes. These single family dwellings were where Travis and David lived. Again, these houses were within walking distance of the school, and many of the children who lived in Pine Acres and the surrounding neighborhood walked or biked back and forth to school. The roads in this neighborhood were tricky to drive, as they were bumpy and full of

holes. Travis's house was typical of homes in the area. He lived in a home approximately 900 to 1000 square feet in size, and he shared this home with his mother and brother. (Although the mother acknowledged only the three family members living there, a grandmother and sister-in-law were also present each time I called the home. Since they babysat for Travis and his brother while the mother worked late at night, I considered them family members in-residence.) The home was surrounded by a broken wooden fence, had a dirt driveway with a newly-purchased ten-to twelve-year-old vehicle in it, and sported a broken screen door. Symmetrical stepping stones led the way from the driveway to the front door. Inside, the carpet was stained and torn, and the windows were protected by bars to discourage burglary. Inside the home, however, like Leon's mother, Travis's mom kept the home spotless--tidy and neat, with rugs disguising the condition of the flooring. She said the neighborhood "used to be good . . . used to be nice" (6/5/98) but that the changes in residents had caused it to become "kind of weird." Unlike other parents, however, she did not talk of moving out of the neighborhood. Although families expressed some degree of unhappiness with their neighborhoods and said they did not spend much time outside of their homes, family pride was evident in photographs, samples of children's artwork, and other decorations found within the home. Generally, parents' discomfort with the neighborhood was related to their concerns about the socialization of their children.

When I reviewed the children's files and interviewed parents, I found that all of the African American children qualified for free or reduced lunches, and most received some other form of public assistance (e.g., subsidized housing). Both of the case study students' (Precious and Leon) mothers worked outside of the home, and each of their mothers had completed some college coursework. The low-income status of the

African American families offered a contrast to the higher income levels of the White children at Pine Elementary.

Higher-income children. All of the White children participating in this study lived within a short driving distance of the school in what I would label older middle to upper-middle class neighborhoods. These neighborhoods were generally characterized by single family houses of 1500 square feet or more, two-car garages, sidewalks, and grassy play areas for children, and they were often inhabited by couples who worked in white-collar professions. I reviewed the records of the White children who participated in the study and saw that the ten white participants' parents worked in fields that included medicine, engineering, teaching, administration, and small business. Homes in the area were highly marketable, with asking prices often reaching well beyond \$100,000. I did not visit the homes of the White children since they were not my focus study participants, but I did observe the neighborhoods in which they lived and had many opportunities to meet their parents as they volunteered at school.

Disparate opportunities. Income differences were not invisible to the children in the class. In fact, evidence of these differences appeared in children's writing and show-and-tell time monologues. Children with more money routinely talked and wrote about expensive toys, expensive trips, relatives visiting by airplane, and earning allowances. For instance, toys shared by the White children included expensive dolls (e.g., American Girls doll retailing for ninety-nine dollars), Beanie Babies, Barbies, video system games, and motorized stuffed animals. Mary reported that she owned 100 Beanie Babies. The toys shared by the African American students included toys purchased at the gumball-type of machine found outside of grocery stores, empty perfume bottles, the brochure for a wrapping paper sale fund drive, yard sale finds, and lotion bottles purchased with money borrowed from a relative. Giggles after one poor

student "shared" the return envelope for her school-picture payment provided evidence of students' awareness of these differences.

The different kinds of opportunities surfaced when students made reference to their travel, too. While the White children discussed taking trips to Universal Studios, Sea World, camping, Washington D.C., North Carolina, a local skating rink, water-skiing, and going on "four airplanes," (03/p.1; 07/p.12; 12/p.10; 25/p.18; 30/p.11; 36/p.7; 37/p.12), the opportunities mentioned by the African American children were different. Precious mentioned traveling in a car to visit her Auntie who lived in the local community (12/p.12), and Travis wrote a poem about "places in the world." One of his places was the camp that all elementary school students in the district visited annually, and the other was a local lake (11/p.7). When children in the class wrote about their personal experiences, these differences surfaced in their journals, as well as in their classroom discussions.

Life in Mrs. Smith's Class

Schedules. Mrs. Smith often arrived at school well before the morning bell, as she welcomed early students to read and write before school. Students sat around four or five tables (it varied during the school year) spaced throughout the classroom. Mrs. Smith labeled each table with the names of the students who would use this table for their writing workshop station, and she changed the groupings at least twice during the school year. She arranged her day into the following sequence, shared by all three Friendship Program teachers.

In the morning, children began writing in their journals. Mrs. Smith placed the journals at the tables so that students would need only to find their own and then begin writing. As children completed their writing, they often took their journals to her for

feedback. Later, they might help other children with their writing or begin reading books from one of the many crates and bookcases on the outskirts of the room.

Following writing time, Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Tyler would ring a bell signifying to the students that the "Share" time had begun, and children would choose seats on a carpeted area near the center of the classroom. While the teacher sat in a chair, she called upon individual students to advance to the front of the group to stand and read their writing to the group. Following the reading, audience members were invited to "ask questions" and make "comments." Occasionally, they were limited to questions only for purposes of saving time. Frequently, the sharer (i.e., the child whose work was being read aloud) would select other students for questions and comments. Children also had the opportunity to select friends for passing out snacks, going to the office, and (occasionally) completing classwork.

Children were enthusiastic about wanting chances to share their work. They raised and waved their hands, trying to be sure the teacher noticed them, and some of them bargained with Mrs. Smith ahead of time for a slot on the morning group-shared writing time agenda. More than once, I heard her tell students that, although they had been promised a chance to share, time had run out. As the year progressed, the children's stories became longer and longer (particularly after "chapters" came into vogue), and the share time became lengthier. This was an exciting time to observe reader response because the teacher treated children's compositions with the respect afforded real "literature" and treated group-shared writing as important. The children's shared writing will be referred to as "group-shared writing" throughout my report.

After group-shared writing time, students generally shuffled into groups for an activity called "Skills." Mrs. Smith explained that she called the activity "skills" rather than "reading" so that children would not confuse phonics and structured reading comprehension activities with the literature they really did "read." During this half-

hour, teachers, interns, and aides would each take a small group of children (grouped homogeneously based on reading achievement test scores) and teach reading skills. I generally observed Mrs. Smith's group since she had the "lowest" group of students. This group was exclusively African American for most of the year, and Latresa, Shade, Billy, and Tiffany were in this group. Mrs. Smith was required to use a program called "Reading Mastery" in which she taught children to sound out letters and then blend sounds to make words. She also taught a range of behaviorist-style responses with cues, such as "say it fast" and to not respond until her finger was beneath the word, or to imitate an action depicted in a drawing (e.g., touching one's head). The teachers frequently re-evaluated group placements.

Following the Skills period, teachers conducted whole group Friendship Program business, or they released students for recess. I routinely observed during the recess period to gain perspective on which children paired off with whom and to observe any peer patterns across time. The openness of recess also provided me an opportunity to talk informally with teachers and children, sometimes participating in their conversations about friendship, home life, or literacy.

Next, children went to lunch (which, toward the second half of the observations, I began attending), then recess again, show and tell, then mathematics, specials (such as music or physical education), and explore time. Although my initial observations were for the whole day, I spent most of my time with Mrs. Smith and her students during the mornings and early afternoon as these were the times when read alouds, independent readings, and group-shared writing events were most likely. The teacher and intern sometimes scheduled picture book readings before the morning recess or after the lunchtime recess, and I also wanted to observe many of the children sharing their journals to see how they responded to one another's writing. I occasionally remained in the classroom to assist with supervision of mathematics and

explore activities in an effort to further observe peer relationships and ethnically related behaviors.

For almost any "floor" time, students chose their own seating unless the teacher deemed a child's behavior inappropriate and asked him or her to sit elsewhere. Ways the teacher would express her dissatisfaction with a child's behavior varied between the teacher and the intern, but she generally gave a warning first, (e.g., "Precious, you need to be sitting down") before moving the child (e.g., "Bill, please go over to that chair. If I can't concentrate, how can anyone else?" [08/p.4]). Occasionally, the teacher asked the children to sit in a particular formation, such as a circle, but generally the children were seated on the floor in patterns created on their own.

Reading time. Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Tyler used themes to organize their literature study with students. For instance, when the class studied the Midwest Region of the United States, they read books that dealt with farming, including *The Midnight Farm* (Lindbergh, 1987), *Good Morning, Chick* (Ginsburg, 1980), *Night Noises* (Fox, 1989), *Night is Coming* (Nikola-Lisa, 1991), and *Seasons on the Farm* (Miller, 1986). The teachers organized a field trip for the students to visit a real farm and observe the animals and ways of life on a farm, and the children engaged in an author study of Denise Fleming. Even the classroom reflected the theme, with farm books lining the tops of bookcases, a scarecrow on the wall, and many examples of children's farm-related writing adorning the bulletin boards. During a study of the Great Lakes Region, the children studied Lois Ehlert's books, reading many of them in class, imitating her illustration techniques, and, eventually, writing stories based on Ehlert's work. From the ceiling hung mobiles with Great Lakes facts, and children participated in research on the region. During that period, Mrs. Tyler also read the children *Paddle to the Sea* (Holling, 1941/1969), a chapter book about a wooden

Native American figure that travels about the Great Lakes in a canoe. Hickman (1981) suggests that a teacher's use of themes can influence children's response opportunities. She categorizes theme-use as an aspect of the "manipulable context" (p.352)--part of the situation we can control, to some extent.

Despite their richness, I found the books used for the theme studies offered few opportunities for students to read about non-White families and characters, so I occasionally asked Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Tyler to read a story with African American characters. The teachers also read stories with Hispanic or African American themes or characters voluntarily because of their own commitment to representing multicultural characters. (This commitment was evident when the children demonstrated familiarity with *all* the books guest readers came to share with the children during African American Read-In Week.) Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Tyler read books with African American main characters, including *The Story of Ruby Bridges* (Coles, 1995), *Kinda Blue* (Grifalconi, 1993), *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* (Miller, 1994), *More Than Anything Else* (Bradby, 1995), *Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King* (Marzollo, 1993), and *Always My Dad* (Wyeth, 1995) during the study. These books supplemented the themed books read during children's study of the Great Lakes Region and the Midwest. I have included, in the Appendix, a complete list of the books read to students during this study.

Summary

My objective in this study was to describe response and ethnicity in an effort to describe and evaluate any relationship that might exist between the two. In this chapter, I introduced the setting and the people who participated in this study. I described the teacher and intern, the classroom, and a little about the life situations of participating students. I also explained some of the factors influencing the books

chosen for read-alouds. In the next section, I describe the social context for response activity I found in the whole-class and small-group read-alouds. I analyze the way the expectations of the teacher and peer group influence students responses, for the children's social network influenced the ways in which children responded. I also describe some of the ethnic characteristics of the students most at risk of low reading achievement--the African American children who identified least with the culture of school. Later, the ways in which literate behaviors tie to these characteristics of ethnicity should illuminate the ties between response and ethnicity.

CHAPTER 5

CLASSROOM COMMUNITIES FOR RESPONSE

In this chapter, I describe the community in which children in Mrs. Smith's class were responding to literature and classmates' group-shared writing. First, I explore the nature of the peer relationships I saw Mrs. Smith's students establish. In doing so, I hope to clarify the social networking in the class. Next, I explain some of the ethnic differences I observed among students in the study, as these differences seemed tied to some of the children's responses that I describe in subsequent chapters. Finally, I share the ways in which Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Tyler validated or invalidated certain kinds of response. I identify the ways teachers solicit and respond to student responses so that these patterns can be later compared against evidence of literate behaviors among case study students.

Peer Relationships

Early in the study, I observed that children tended to spend their playtime with children who were like themselves--either by social class, ethnicity, or academic achievement level. Noticing how the child's choice of friends could sculpt what that child would perceive as "appropriate" action in the classroom or could indicate status within the community of the classroom, I decided to keep track of children's friendship patterns. To collect these data, I noted the children's self-selected seating arrangements, their recess playmates, and lunchtime seatmates. In analyzing the data on peer relationships, I chose to analyze only student-initiated interactions or pairings and not attend to teacher-made pairings or teacher-determined seating arrangements.

I maintained a record of each child's self-initiated contacts and then analyzed these records for evidence of interracial socializing. In looking at the full set of records, I discovered the following ways in which children demonstrated their peer groups. First, children would select seating near their friends. Second, children would choose to play with those same friends during recess. Third, children would sometimes write their friends (or the children they perceived to be their friends) into their stories as characters. This last observation, however, was part of a reader-response trend and was, in itself, a way of showing affinity to a particular group of peers.

Play and Seating Patterns

When I began examining student peer patterns, I did so because I had noticed racial segregation within the classroom. Whenever students were in control of who their playmates would be, the segregation surfaced. For that reason, in this section, I will discuss peer patterns as they relate to the racial groups within the classroom. I collected these observations during the time children sat on the floor reading, the periods they spent sitting in the centrium, the lunch period, and explore time.

As I looked at the records of student pairings and groupings, I noticed Leon (an African American kindergartner), Sam (a White kindergartner and Leon's best friend) and Travis (an African American second grader) were the only students who regularly initiated positive interracial contact. This pattern was not surprising since the Leon-Sam pairing was evident almost every day in the classroom, but both of these boys also frequently played and sat with other children of different ethnicities. Leon and Sam were best friends, often holding hands, hugging, or wrestling with one another and almost always sitting together--at lunch, recess, or explore time. Leon and Sam became friends early in the school year and were almost inseparable. For instance, even though Mrs. Smith had arranged for the boys to sit at different tables for Writing Workshop, Sam often found his way to Leon for help or socializing.

Sam walks over to the table where we [Jeane and Leon] are, and he stands between Leon and me.

Sam: How do you write, "The bear's manners"?

Jeane: Start with the first word you hear--the.

(He turns to look at me.)

Leon: T-H. It has T-H in it.

(Sam stands there, leaves to get his journal, and returns with it. He puts it on our table.)

Sam: (to Leon) What's that word again?

Leon: T-H-E. (12/p.3)

Mrs. Smith noted the ease with which Leon and Travis, another African American student, fit into the multiple peer groups within the classroom (17/p.17).

What was most striking about the patterns I found is that many students had initiated no interracial seatings or play during the year I observed. In fact, a few students had only *negative* interracial exchanges. For instance, of Latresa's 22 (documented, self-initiated) contacts, only one was interracial, and that was a negative exchange in which she made a face at Mary (07/p.08) when Mary answered a question correctly. Likewise, Tiffany had 24 exchanges and only one (negative) interracial experience. When I examined the experiences of the participating White girls in the class, I found that none had initiated a single positive exchange with an African American girl or had ever sat next to an African American classmate. In fact, of 86 patterns noted for the White girls, only three (or 3.4%) were interracial, and those were negative. Pat called Shade a "little stealer!" [37/p.11]; Lauren and Mary ignored Precious [30/p.1]; Pat ignored Precious' efforts to talk to her [37/p.12]).

Tiffany and Latresa formed a group socially distant from the Pat, Lisa, Mary, Karen, Lauren, Melinda, and Kaley group. The former two played together frequently, and the latter social group was exclusively limited to these few participants. Precious, however, moved within the White peer group more than did her African American peers, probably because her academic achievement put her into a reading

group with the White children. I noticed that she sat within a group of White children on four occasions, but her main interracial exchanges were negative ones in which she was purposely ignored or in which she took some action against a White peer.

Precious remained alone a lot of the time. As I will discuss in the chapter about Precious, she found herself between peer groups--not accepted into the White girls' group but also not fitting well into Tiffany, Latresa, and Shade's group. During one-fourth of the recess periods I observed, Precious walked or played alone. I consider this figure striking considering that for some of the recess periods, I could not observe her because she was removed from recess and in the Listening Club.¹ If she had been on the playground every recess period, I suspect the percentage of alone time would have been much higher.

On the few occasions when our conversations turned toward friendships, I asked students about these patterns I had observed. At lunch one day, I approached the topic with Precious and Tiffany.

Jeane: Why don't you girls play with White girls like Pat and Lisa?

Precious: I do, but they be tellin' me to go away.

(Later, I turn to Lauren and Melinda.)

Jeane: Why don't I ever see you play with Latresa, Shade, or Precious?

Melinda: I don't know. (This is said in an "I don't care" tone of voice and followed by meowing and imaginative play.) (37/pp.10-11)

Exclusionary Practices

From my observations, Precious was correct in her informal assessment of the White girls' attitudes toward her. I observed her and other African American girls'

¹ The names of children who misbehaved during the day were listed to attend the "Listening Club" during the recess period. Listening Club children sat inside, usually at tables, while their classmates played at recess.

attempts to enter the White girls' play areas during recess or at lunch, and they were rebuffed each time. On one occasion, as I walked up to the lunch line, Latresa and Tiffany held my hands and each asked, "Will you sit with me?" Lisa, who was in front of them in line, turned around and also said to me, "Sit with me!" When I responded that I would sit with her if she agreed to sit with Latresa, Tiffany, and me, she turned around and dropped the subject. She made no effort to sit at our end of the table at lunch (39/pp.13-14). On another occasion, as Precious looked for a lunch seat that was distant from Tiffany (with whom she was fighting), she could find seating only on the White side of the table. She stood at the White side of the table, holding her tray, waiting for some permission from the girls who sat there. She made eye contact with Mary, who responded with an aggressive, "Whaaaaaat?!" Lisa declared that there was no room for Precious at their table. As Precious got tears in her eyes, we sat down near the end of the White table, and I provided a buffer between Precious and Tiffany (40/p.7). During another lunch period, I asked Tiffany and Latresa peer-related questions.

(At the table, I sit between Latresa and Tiffany.)

Jeane: Who are your friends?

Latresa: Tiffany. [Also] ____ (non-participant) was, but she not now.

Jeane: How about Precious?

Latresa: Yeah, she my friend.

(I turn to Tiffany, and she begins answering, too.)

Tiffany: Latresa, Travis. (She's listing friends and looking around the group.)

Jeane: Latresa, do you have friends who are boys?

Latresa: No.

Jeane: Why not?

Latresa: My cousin is. But not David, cause he's so ugly.

Jeane: What about Travis?

Latresa: Oh yeah, I forgot. But NOT Shade cause she fight too much.

(Both agree that Karen's a friend, and Mary--but not Pat or Lisa. Later, when I ask Mrs. Tyler about this response from the girls, she suggests it is because Karen's nice and easygoing--not negative like Pat and Lisa.)

Jeane: Why don't you play with Kaley or Lauren?

Tiffany: They already have somebody to play with.
 (I turn to Lauren and Kaley and ask the same thing. They are sitting together across the table, but with the noise in the cafeteria, it is hard for them to hear--like they're in their own little world.)

Their response:

Lauren: Cause we have a club for me, Kaley, and Melinda. (39/p.9)

Boys had significantly more interracial peer interactions and more interracial seating patterns than the girls. Every participating boy had at least two positive interracial play/seating experiences--and most boys had many more than that. One of the reasons for the increase in interracial interaction for boys was the recess-time play activity of football. One of the male teachers would play football with the Friendship Program boys, and many boys, regardless of ethnicity or race, joined in the game. When boys would return to the classroom, they would often sit with their recess playmates--thus leading to the interracial seating patterns in the classroom. Leon and Sam's close friendship also fostered more interracial play opportunities for boys since both African American and White boys would join their pairing to engage in group play (e.g., 08/p.1; 16/p.21; 28/p.8).

Within this integrated class there existed informal racial (and socio-economic) segregation. Leon and Sam, however, broke the trend and would be found together frequently, despite the groupings of their classmates. Generally, though, when I mapped seating arrangements, I found clusters of children seated together by race. This occurred when children seated themselves on the carpet for classroom activities, such as group-shared writing time and read-aloud time, and was especially evident during lunch. During one observation (40/p.8) the African American and White children seated on the carpet were physically split down the middle of the group. During my final observation of the study, I discovered that the lunch table communities were segregated. White children sat at one table, and African American children sat at another, but Leon and Sam physically separated themselves from the

rest of the class in order to sit together (47/p.1). I asked the children about their lunchtime seating preferences.

- Jeane: (I spoke to the group sitting near me--not to anyone in particular.)
Why do you sit together always?
- Latresa: We friends.
- Precious: Yeah, we friends.
(Travis and a non participating African American male repeat the sentiment.)
(47/p.1)

Over time, I saw a hierarchy evolve within the classroom. Some children's behaviors were emulated by other children who desired to move into their peer group. Among the group of students at the top of the hierarchy were the White second grade girls, Pat, Lisa, Mary, and Karen. When I asked individual children in the class to list their friends, they always included this in-group of girls in their lists, even when peer play patterns indicated no (or only a negative) relationship with in-group classmates (e.g., Precious lists "Lisa, Mary, Latresa, Tiffany, Pat, and Karen" as her friends [12/p.11]). Latresa and Tiffany enlightened me to their awareness of the White girls one lunch period.

(We've been having lunch time chit-chat about rollerblading, school busses, and neighborhoods. I sit with my African American student friends--Precious, Tiffany, Latresa, and NP. I ask who they sit with at lunch time.)

Latresa: I sit with Precious and Tiffany, but sometime I sit by Karen.

Tiffany: No, sometimes Karen sit *by her*. (36/p.6)

I never observed Latresa sit *with* Karen, but I did see days when the White girls' group and the African American girls' groups would be seated next to one another, but they never spoke. Tiffany implicitly understood the lack of significance attached to being physically beside someone who then ignored the nearby seatmate.

Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Tyler tried to make class more racially-integrated and encouraged cross-cultural friendships. I noticed that the organization of the tables for

writing time showed heterogeneous groupings of students--for instance, Latresa, Lauren, Mary, and Billy in a group--and that the teachers often paired children interracially for structured response activities. The teachers paired students with children who were not their regular playmates. The results of these pairings were mixed. Students usually worked together cooperatively, but sometimes children were so unfamiliar with one another that little dialogue was shared between them. And in some situations, the result was negative (e.g., Latresa complains that Karen always gets leadership tasks when they play Bingo).

On other occasions, the teachers allowed children to choose their workmates. One day, Mrs. Smith asked the children to choose partners of the opposite gender for a writing activity. She called the children in the following order, waited for the child to choose a partner, then called upon another child. Called-upon children are listed first, and the partners they chose are listed by their names after the dashes.

Devon--Lisa

Sam--Mary

Mrs. Smith sends David to go sit with Precious, who's already seated at a table.

Tyler--Non Participant

Mark--Kaley

Travis--Pat (Pat tries to protest and asks to be partnered with Lauren.)

Billy--Lauren

Chris--Melinda

Leon--Latresa and Tiffany (the only children who have not been chosen by anyone) (22/p.23)

The African American children, when chosen early, often chose White children for partners, as both Billy and Travis did in this example. The African American girls were the least desirable partners in the eyes of the children making partner selections.

On two occasions, I observed Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Tyler create explicit opportunities for children of different ethnicities to work together in a joint effort.

One day before recess, Mrs. Tyler had been reading *Meet Danitra Brown* (Grimes, 1994) to the children. After the reading, the children began talking with the intern.

(Note: Mrs. Tyler is indicated by "I," my abbreviation for "Intern.")

[Mrs. Tyler has been reading *Meet Danitra Brown*--interesting exchange. Precious has been reading other books during the read-aloud.]

David: Look at Precious!

I: Oh, if we're all looking at Precious, is that the right, nice thing to do?

Class: No.

I: And if we're saying Precious's doing something bad, is that a nice thing to say?

Class: No.

Shade: No, no, no, no.

I: No.

(Karen's hand is up.)

I: Let's sit down. While I was reading, should she have been looking at a book?

Tyler: Mrs. Tyler, look at the teacher, wear the ears, and you're (?unintelligible?).

I: Right, and what happens sometimes when you're looking at books over there? One time a book got dropped in water. And that was a new book.

David: __(name)__ did it! (I can't hear the first part where he names the person.)

I: We're not saying who did it; we're just saying what could happen.

Chris: Let's stay still and think.

(Karen and Lisa's hands go up. Precious moves to the back of the group.)

I: You know what I want? Right now I want you to think about how to be friends with everyone. Just like these two girls [in the story] are friends. And if I called you to say something, when we came back in [from recess], if I said, Lisa and Latresa, 'You're friends.' Lisa and Latresa, who's not even listening right now. Latresa and Lisa. How would you introduce Latresa? How could she be your friend?

Lisa: We could play together and share with her.

I: Well, think about that while you're on the playground.

Tiffany: Play together.

Latresa: I could let her play with my baby doll.

I: You've gotta talk to each other, Latresa and Lisa, out on the playground. We're gonna let you introduce each other, just like this poem. Just like Danitra Brown. (16/ pp.19-20)

During the recess period that followed, the peer groupings were fairly typical, except that I eventually saw Lisa leave her original group and walk across the playground to approach Latresa and Tiffany. Although I saw her walk over, she did not stay, and I did not observe the subsequent introductions Mrs. Tyler had encouraged them to be able to do. Instead of introducing Latresa, Lisa awarded another student with the "Good Pumpkin Award" she had designed and colored.

In another instance, Mrs. Smith had noticed that Karen, who left for the office each day just before lunch in order to pick up medicine, always took one of the girls from the White girls' group with her. Most frequently, Mary accompanied her. Normally, Mrs. Smith would give Karen the verbal "okay" to leave for the clinic, and the girls would begin raising their hands to encourage Karen to "pick" them to go with her. This was happening when Mrs. Smith interrupted.

Mrs. Smith: Now I would like Lisa, Mary, and (nonparticipant) and Devon to go wash their hands and get ready for lunch. Karen, I want you to go to the clinic with someone who's NOT in line.

(Karen looks and looks at the children on the floor. Mary has a heartbroken look on her face; she's already in line. It's such a symbol of status to get out of the classroom first and get to go with Karen to the clinic. Karen always picks Lisa or Mary.)

Latresa holds her hand up. "You never pick me," she says.

Mrs. Smith: It would be nice if you picked Latresa or Precious for a change.

Karen: (choosing) Lauren. (35/p.21)

Latresa and Precious raised their hands daily during the selection of partner, and each day, Karen chose someone else—even when Mrs. Smith explicitly suggested that she call on Latresa or Precious. Both girls continued, however, to perceive Karen as a "friend." During group-shared writing time, they continued to choose her for questions and comments, and they both listed her as a friend during interviews. This was not, however, reciprocal.

Ethnic Differences Between Students

The student-segregation in this classroom was, to some extent, a result of ethnic differences in behaviors and how children responded to others whose cultural behaviors were different from their own. Since African American children in the class were retained in disproportionate numbers for Listening Club or were pulled out of play practice for talking or other disruptive behavior, students of different ethnicities held different status in the classroom. I surmise, although none of the student participants told me this, that the middle-class White children perceived frequent Listening Club members as potential threats to their status as well-behaved students. Therefore, they may have avoided play with children who came with a label indicating increased likelihood of being a disciplinary problem.

I asked Mrs. Smith about why the children chose the same White children (e.g., Karen and Mary) again and again for partnering in activities. She explained, "The children tend to pick White children for tasks that require someone who can read or behave. There seems to be an unspoken awareness of what it takes to get things done" (17/p.17). She also had noticed the seating patterns of the African American students. She mentioned that Leon and Travis were happy almost anywhere but that Shade, Tiffany, and Latresa tended to sit with other African American females. She suggested it might be related to their neighborhoods. "They want to be with their friends," she explained.

As I analyzed the data on ethnic identity and ethnically related behaviors, I noticed that indicators of ethnicity were more complex for some of the children in the group than they were for others. For instance, although Leon and Precious were both African American and both lived in low income neighborhoods, they identified with different ethnic values and were willing, to differing degrees, to engage in activities more generally associated with other ethnic groups (particularly ones with

stereotypically White, middle class values). The individuality of students makes definite lines hard to draw as I describe ethnic "groups" within the classroom. For this reason, I use the following chapters to describe case study students in detail. However, for the purposes of this overview, I will describe what I perceive--upon reviewing a large number of observation transcripts and interviews--as the ethnically linked behaviors associated with the group of African American students who interacted least with the White children in the classroom. This group, the Marginalized Group, includes Latresa, Tiffany, Shade, Precious, David, and Billy. The group does not include Leon, as I consider him a member of another ethnic group. I identified three categories of observable ethnic behaviors that were present *only* among this group of students.

The labels for these categories have been developed by a researcher who is not part of this ethnic group and necessarily reflect, at best, my approximation of "external-insider" status (Banks, 1998, p.8) as a researcher. Banks describes researchers from outside a cultural group as either "external-insiders" or "external-outsiders." The external insider endorses many of the values and beliefs of the cultural group under study and is perceived as an "'adopted' insider" (p.8) by members of the cultural group. The external-outsider researcher studies a cultural group other than her own but has little understanding of or appreciation for the values and beliefs of the cultural group under study. I perceive Banks' two "external" researcher positions as existing on a continuum. While I doubt that most families of the children I studied would embrace me as a member of their own group, the families I approached said that my analysis accurately portrayed their children's situations. Further, I believe that my analysis respects the beliefs and values of the children under study. Therefore, although I am not necessarily an "insider" in all ways, I remain committed to the ideals of the insider status and demonstrate, I hope, the values commitments Banks suggests

for cross-cultural researchers. Even so, I am culturally limited by the language I have to use in describing phenomena I observed.

Temper and Aggressive Behavior

The only examples of overt aggressiveness or severe temper tantrums (identified as those which caused the teachers to need outside assistance with a child or required a child be kept away from others) I observed while in this classroom were among the Marginalized group identified above. Aggressive behaviors generally involved some kind of touching of an unwilling student or (in my definition) behaviors which would have logically preceded such behavior. For instance, when Latresa put her face directly in front of David's face and made an angry facial expression (10/p.9), I counted this as aggressive behavior.

Other examples of aggressive behaviors evident among only this group were slapping (08/p.6), poking or pulling on another student's clothes (09/p.17), hitting (11/p.4), punching gestures (15/p.20), threats (such as "I'm gonna get her, I'm gonna hit her") (38/p.3), and pinching (43/p.2). David, when angry, once snapped his scissors in front of--and close to--Leon's face (09/p.15). I observed Latresa and Tiffany taunting a White girl during a large group activity in the centrium. They were "touching the White girl, pulling down the straps on the girl's dress, hitting each other, and laughing." (36/p.6). I felt a research dilemma when studying some of these behaviors--always wondering when to step in and when to remain on the silent sidelines.

I also included in this category the temper tantrums exhibited by Billy, Shade, and (occasionally) David. The teacher explained some of these tantrums as resulting from dissonance between home and school. In the home, many of these children carried responsibility for making most of their own day-to-day decisions or cared for

younger siblings, and these children were resistant to obeying what sometimes appeared to be arbitrary teacher requests. The tantrums I observed Billy give generally came suddenly, and included loud crying and folded arms, aggressive behavior toward other students, and stomping about the classroom.

Billy was mad with a MAD face when he reentered (after being forcibly removed from the classroom) the classroom. He walked right into the middle of the group (that was in a circle formation), crossed his arms, and put his eyebrows down. He frowned and then walked aggressively up to the other children. "What you lookin' at?!" he barked. (38/p.7)

Since these behaviors identified a child as one who could not follow the rules (i.e., loud, disruptive behavior was never permitted in class), some children--especially those who did not engage in such activity and found it foreign--considered Billy a volatile playmate and likely to hurt or get another child into trouble. I was surprised to see that other African American students were the only children in the class to show empathetic, comforting behaviors toward post-tantrum children. For instance, during one of Billy's tantrums, Latresa attempted to jump in and usher Billy away from the group of children (37/p.6). African American girls were likely to jump in and try to prevent an angry boy from retaliating against someone who had angered them.

Shade tries to choke David, and he hits her back. I see him crying. As we walk in line (to turn in trays and throw away trash), I see an NP put her arm around him and hold his arms to keep him from hitting Shade again. (42/p.5)

Perhaps these girls had enough experience with their own fights to be able to empathize with the boys. Indeed, Latresa had been suspended from the school bus several times for fighting ("Latresa got in a fight [on the bus] this morning" 36/p.6, Precious told me one day as we ate lunch). I observed *her* kick Billy once, after which she was sent to the behavior resource teacher while Tiffany comforted Billy (40/p.1). Amazingly, however, only the African American girls or Leon would offer comfort or support to angry children.

Dancing and Rhythmic Movement

The Marginalized students also exhibited dancing behaviors I did not see among any of the other students in the class. Precious danced a lot during class, on the floor and in line, and she often accompanied her dancing movements with stomps or hand slaps. Tiffany (and sometimes Latresa) also used head-jerking to supplement verbal messages to other students. I found this practice hard to describe in my fieldnotes, except to call it "shaking her head" and to say that it involved moving her head and neck in opposite directions, from side to side, while extending the neck outward toward the person she was addressing. (My lack of immediate understanding is probably a sign of my outsider status.) When she was angry, this gesture could appear threatening (to me), and when she did it to another member of this particular ethnic group, the response was often reciprocal. David and Bill also exhibited the dancing movements and head gestures. During play rehearsal, Billy sat beside me on the floor, happily making dancing moves with his arms, using his fists and looking like he was churning butter (38/p.1). On another occasion, he used the head-shaking to convey his anger at me for not sitting with him at lunchtime. I observed him shaking his head as he passed angry messages to me via a nonparticipant (42/p.5). When Shade brought her book *Old Black Fly* to share during show-and-tell time, David burst into a dance while she spoke (03/p.6). Precious, however, moved and danced more than any of the other children.

Precious is sitting on the floor and shaking--making a little chanting sound--moving her lips and making a soft chant. Looks like it goes with the movement--almost like a cheer. She stops to see the picture (in the book) and gets up higher on her feet. (09/p.8)

She also made the stomps and claps while walking in line (01/p.4) and while waiting to see other children perform a skit of *Mole's Hill* (Ehlert, 1994).

Precious is butting other children in the back. She runs into Tiffany. Tiffany and David say, "I'm gonna tell." Then Precious starts tapping her legs and drumming her thighs, hopping up and down a little bit. (15/p.20).

She also laughed and danced upon seeing that Sam fell out of his chair one morning (07/p.13). Although I realize this category represents a stereotypically-held perception of how African American children behave, I found it a striking difference in this particular classroom. No children, other than the Marginalized group, exhibited it. The movements and dancing behaviors did not appear distracting to other children and were often modified versions of the sophisticated chants and cheers small groups of children had learned at home and would later perform outside at recess. This category of difference also explains, I think, the movement-related behaviors of students during reading time.

Taking Things / Ownership

I also observed this group of students take or attempt to take possessions belonging to other people. Again, the children in this group were the only students I observed engage in this behavior. For instance, in an early observation, Precious and Latresa reached up and took my name tag off of my jacket, pulled my notebook and pen out of my hand, and wore my sunglasses--all without my prior consent (07/p.11). They also did this with other classmates. Latresa took Billy's markers one day (12/p.1) and reached for my laptop computer, trying to type on it, a few days later (16/p.27). I also saw Precious take blocks (09/p.14) and scissors (07/p.14) from Sam. Sam clearly could not understand her behavior.

Sam picks up a pair of scissors. "I'm using these scissors," he says. (There are several pair there--more than the group needs.) Precious reaches into his hand and pulls the scissors out of his fingers.

Precious: *I'm using them.*

Sam: You didn't have to snatch them.

(Then, to Mark) She just snatched them out of my hand. All the way.

(Mark doesn't take her on, and I see Sam later pick up another pair of scissors.) (07/p.14)

The girls tried to touch the share time materials Lisa and Mary brought (39/p.9,11) and take Mary's journal (14/p.4). This was perhaps the hardest of the domains for me to identify and describe because my concept of ownership and that of the girls were so different. I also observed that the teachers' ownership perceptions were much like mine. I wrote about this issue while studying to begin making sense of my feelings.

Precious reaches out and takes my name tag off of me. She puts it on herself, and then she gives it back to me when I ask for it again. [This is strange. None of the White children have ever taken anything from me before without my consent. Yet Shade takes my pen, and Latresa and Precious have always (i.e., even last year) taken my things—even if only for a moment or two. Wonder why? Cultural visions of ownership? I know I'm very middle class in my feelings about space and ownership.] (07/p.11)

I could see, from the reactions of White children and the White teachers, that my initial "gut" reaction was probably similar to theirs. However, I saw no evidence that they were moving away, as I was, from culturally influenced gut reactions and into deeper cross cultural understandings of the phenomenon. Although I had initially felt taken aback by the children's behaviors, I later began to perceive their actions as suggestive of a curiosity with me and my things. I also found that their willingness to treat me like a classmate suggested I was carrying out the unobtrusive role I had hoped upon beginning this study.

[It's share time. Lisa is sharing her collection of stuffed cats. She puts them on a table and is preparing to talk about them.]

Ms.T.: Okay, we need to stay seated. Sit down, so everyone can see. Tiffany. (Tiffany, Devon, Mary, and Sam get close up to see. Tiffany and Latresa get closer and reach up to touch the kittens on the table. Lisa names each one and tells the story of how she received it.)

Ms. T.: All right, you cannot touch them right now. They do not belong to you, Latresa. (39/p.11)

As I tried to make sense of the exclusion of the White girls' peer group, I observed Precious do things that upset White group members. For instance, when Melinda brought a toy phone to school for "sharing," Precious took it.

When Skills is over, Precious takes away Melinda's toy phone. She pretends to talk on it and runs away with it. Melinda chases her around the room and the bookcase. Precious eventually runs out of the room with it. All the while, Shade is crying out loud about something, but I don't know what it is. . . . Later, I see Precious is in Listening Club. Mrs. Smith says to her, "You need to think about what you could have done to prevent Melinda from crying and wailing." (23/p.7)

The White girls seemed to grow particularly annoyed with the African American girls based on ownership issues. Their facial expressions indicated a dislike for having someone try, as Precious, Latresa, and Tiffany often did, to handle someone else's toys or other items. The White girls did not perceive ownership issues to be a matter of cultural differences; they simply labeled these events as "stealing" and the perpetrators as "stealers" (37/p.11). Heath's (1983) work suggests that a sense of community ownership might influence children's perceptions of when it is or is not permissible to examine items of interest and that children are socialized into different ways of understanding ownership.

In an effort to see if my findings made sense from the perspective of a member of the children's cultural group, I described my findings to Precious' mother. After my summary of this category, she paused. She said,

Um, I can't identify. (pause) I don't know where she would have learned that. (pause) Oh, yeah, yeah (slowly). Yeah, she'll look at stuff. Like I have a heart-shaped box on my dresser, and she just loves it. She'll look at it and play with it, but she knows I like it, so she puts it back. She likes to play with it, but she never takes it or tries to hide it. But yeah, she will do that. (49/p.1)

Initially, the mother did not identify Precious' home behavior as anything like the "stealing" other White kids perceived. She classified the behavior as one of curiosity

and instant need to discover--not stealing. The children who took things from others never did, to my knowledge, try to hide or keep something they had taken. They reacted to an instant need to hold or see something, and they always returned the item within a short time. Despite the way children, including Precious, returned items, the cultural misunderstandings between children caused friction in the classroom and caused this group of children to be perceived by White children as troublemakers.

Evidence of Outside-of-School Experiences

The home lives of students crept into the classroom in other ways, as well. As I observed this subgroup within the African American group of students, I noted examples of home life experiences that seemed unique to their group (i.e., they were not exhibited by any of the other students in the class). For instance, I noticed the influence of the church on Billy, who responded to *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* (Miller, 1994) with the language of a religious sermon (41/p.5) (see Dyson, 1993, for other examples of this phenomenon), and I found that children within this group--especially the boys--were likely to have seen horror movies such as "Scream" and "Candyman" and be familiar with characters from other such films (35/p.22; 36/p.4). Among the girls, I noticed a growing sense of themselves as future mommies. When reading the word "feed" aloud, Latresa illustrated it with "like you feed a baby" (35/p.16), and she illustrated "fat" with "I'm gonna get fat and have a baby" (39/p.5). Tiffany and Latresa often played in the dress-up area and pretended to be mothers. In my first formal visit, I sat in on their play.

Tiffany holds a white baby doll. She looks at me. "We going to a meeting" she says. I see a Black baby doll (same as this one--just black) on the crib nearby.

Jeane: Is he a good baby? Does he behave?

Tiffany: Yep or we gonna pop him. We going to the meeting.
(I ask them who they are.)

"We're mammas. We're both mammas," they tell me. They are putting on the housekeeping dresses, zipping each other up. I volunteer to fix a strap on Tiffany's dress--tuck it in for her. Latresa puts a flower in her hair. She checks herself in the mirror. (01/p.6)

Latresa and Shade were also likely to call me "Mamma" (04/p.1) when I entered the classroom, and Tiffany included me as her mother in her oral storytelling (40/p.8). (I found it flattering to be considered part of their group and wondered if my own five-year old daughter would have been as open and accepting as these girls were of me.) The girls often showed their ties to one another by making small rhymes or jokes with one another. In the lunch line one day, they had me do the "Cut the gate" activity which involved hand movements and resulted in Precious being able to tell me how many "boyfriends" I would have (38/p.2). Other games were clearly jokes on the participants, so the girls would giggle and refuse to play them with one another unless they could convince me to try the game first.

The children brought their home lives into the classroom with them and used those bonds to help them connect with one another. As an outsider, I often had to be educated in what they were discussing in order to understand them. That is, as I knew little about children's home lives for most of the study, I did not possess the prerequisite knowledge the children thought I would need to make sense of their talk and play. Therefore, children worked to help me understand concepts they *thought* might be foreign to me. They recognized me as an outsider to their cultural group but invited me *inside* to learn more. For example, when a nonparticipating student made a "bird" gesture with his finger at lunchtime, Travis and Leon had a discussion about making birds. When he saw me observing, Leon looked up at me and explained, "A bird is a cuss word" (47/p.11). Billy also educated me when I didn't seem appropriately shocked at a statement he thought should bring a big reaction.

(Students are at the lunch table, eating.)

Billy looks up: Tiffany and Shade was doing it.

Jeane: What do you mean?

(Tiffany is shaking her head "no" at him and shaking her head and neck.)

Billy: Dooooing (stretches) it. Don't you know? Doing it in the bathroom. (He makes body motions associated with intercourse and moves his hips in gyrations.)

Latresa watches him: Yep.

Jeane: (still not shocked) What makes you think that?

Latresa: (interrupting and supporting his comment) Cause Tiffany told me. (40/p.7).

The children explored sexuality at other times, too. During one read-aloud session, David and Tiffany experimented with masturbation while they sat at the back of the group (43/p.10). The children in this group also peeked and giggled at one another while they used the restroom. Although the outsider White children often talked about who would "marry" whom--and, unfortunately, often in ways that used marrying Latresa, Tiffany, and Shade as an insult to another White listener--or put their arms around each other like boyfriend and girlfriend, they did not talk about or visibly demonstrate their sexuality while in class.

Summary

I tried to describe some of the unique behaviors of the group that includes all but two of the African American focus participants. Latresa, Tiffany, Billy, Shade, Precious, and David exhibited these behaviors. Since these behaviors were so dominant among the African American students as a group (with Leon and Travis as exceptions), I identified trends so that the reader might use these as lenses when observing behaviors during reading--looking for patterns of behavior across classroom events. I noted them here because cross-cultural understanding of these behaviors was limited between the White children and the members of this group. Therefore, White children were likely to dismiss such behavior as "bad" and avoid any child who demonstrated it.

Children's Responses in the Classroom

Norms for Participation

In Mrs. Smith's classroom, children were required to follow certain guidelines for participation in read-aloud time (either reading literature or group-shared writing). As I analyzed the data, combing for examples of response, I often found that the teachers' comments guided students' options for behavior. Teachers' behaviors frequently set the context for response, and I believe the teachers' expectations highly influenced reading time in Mrs. Smith's classroom.

Sitting. First, children were expected to sit down during a reading. Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Tyler both used the central carpeted area for holding the read-aloud time. Even though this expectation was often implicit (i.e., a child would ring a bell and all of the children in the classroom would eventually meander toward the carpet and sit, often with no verbal directives), the teachers often found it necessary to explicitly state their expectations, especially when this governing rule for participation was broken.

I noticed early in the study that the children most prone to movement during the read-aloud time were Precious, Tiffany, Latresa, David, and Shade--all African American children. Precious was a frequent violator of the many rules for participation. For example, during group-shared writing time on a day near Halloween, Precious walked from table to table, writing, while Kaley shared her Halloween story.

(While Kaley is reading, Precious is leaning over a table, writing on a brown paper towel.)

Kaley reads haltingly--just her name.

Intern: Kaley has--a--scary--mask. (Intern helps Kaley to read.) Kaley has a scary mask. See it? Does that look scary to you?

{The teacher elaborates on Kaley's mask and seeks volunteers for questions and comments.}

(Children who have hands up are Karen, Sam, Devon, Pat, Leon.)

Intern: Leon (calling on him). Tiffany, Precious, you need to turn around and sit down.

(Now Precious is sitting still.)

Intern: Precious, you weren't going to move today, remember? You were going to stay right there. That was your deal. We talked about your deal. Not being by the table.

(Later. . .)

Leon stands with his journal.

Leon: Fish swim in fresh water.

Intern: Tell them what you wrote.

Leon: Fish swim in fresh water.

Intern: Leon first said, 'fish swim' and we said, is "Fish swim" a sentence?

Child: No.

Intern: No, and he didn't tell us enough about the fish, so what did you say?

Leon: Fish swim in fresh water.

Intern: Is "Fish swim in fresh water" a sentence?

(Tiffany is looking down at a piece of paper in her hands.)

Intern: Leon wants you to look at his fish here. He wants a question that you have about his fish here that's swimming in this fresh water. What's a question?

(Precious walks right up to him while he's standing there.)

Intern: Question, what's a question? Something that he's going to answer, so ask Leon a question.

(to Precious) Sit down. (17/p.5)

In many ways, the battle to have some of the children seated and still for long periods of time became a real challenge for the teacher and intern, for Precious was not the only child to regularly test the norm.

David sits up close to the intern. He leans up into her while she reads.

Intern: Sit down, David. (07/p.5).

Two other kinds of movement appeared in these examples. One was movement toward peers for some kind of social purpose. This type of movement was evident at times other than reading time, too, and involved a child moving toward a peer or away from an undesirable seatmate. Another was movement I call "scooting"--movement that enabled the target child to be closer to the reader or better able to view the illustrations in the text. I observed David (08/p.2; 11/p.1), Latresa (10/p.6;

14/p.8; 42/p.3), Precious (09/p.8), and Tiffany (27/p.4; 31/p.6) engage in the scooting behavior many times. The results were mixed. Occasionally children's movement was ignored, but often the child was verbally reminded to remain seated (e.g., 07/p.6; 29/p.14) or had his or her name added to a discipline list (09/p.5). This rule was reinforced when the teacher verbally recognized a child following the rules and using him or her as an example (36/p.3). As Mrs. Tyler noticed, "Oh, look at Shade. She's our model. David, sit down like Shade. Sit down, David--on your bottom" (11/p.1).

I suspected Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Tyler were working from the perspective of teaching a discourse of power (Delpit, 1988) to students who did not enter school with the codes for participation in the culture of power--children who would later be judged by other teachers on the basis of outward demeanor. Mrs. Smith struggled with her choice to reinforce sitting behavior as a condition of read-aloud time.

That's a conscious decision to teach them how to participate. And yet there are some children who just cannot sit still. The way they respond is a cultural thing, and either we have to tolerate it or we ask them to act like us--and that's asking a lot. (48/p.1)

Waiting for permission to speak. Although the teacher said she was looking for two things--"Do you stay in your spot and do you keep your hands to yourself? I'm checking those two things" (09/p.5)--she was also enforcing some other rules regarding how children engaged response. Children were expected not to interrupt a reading or the comments of a teacher, not to "shout out," and to sit up and look attentive. Lisa, one of the most popular White girls, had memorized the requirements for a read-aloud time. "Look, stay still, and listen," (15/p.5) she recited, when asked by Mrs. Tyler what the children should be listening for in a story. As Sam explained, "You're the mouth, and we're the ears" (22/p.5).

One of the rules was that children should wait to be called upon before speaking. An overly excited David had tried to answer a teacher's question when the

intern responded, "David, no, she [i.e., the child who'd been sharing the story] didn't call you. Sit down" (15/p.17). Children were expected to raise their hands before speaking. I found ample evidence that this rule was not enforced to the same degree with all children, probably because some children, such as David and Precious, ignored the rule frequently while other children, like Mary and Lisa, tested it only rarely. The more infrequent violators were more likely to be overlooked or perceived to have a legitimate reason for speaking without waiting for formal recognition.

Validation or non-validation of response. There were a number of ways that a child's response to the story was validated or invalidated. If a child made a comment the teacher found inappropriate or insufficient, she sometimes told the child "not right now" (03/p.9; 41/p.9), indicating that the comment was not related to the current, ongoing discussion. The teachers also used the strategy of asking if the child was addressing a topic "related to the story . . . [or if she was] sticking to the point" (26/p.18). The teachers often used the strategy of calling on someone else (09/p.20) to answer the questions they had posed. This avoidance strategy was used even more frequently when a child called out the answer before having been called upon formally to respond. I also observed Mrs. Tyler hear the comment and then repeat the directions for participation so that the child could try to formally give his response. For instance, when she asked, "What did you think about this story?" one child blurted out his opinion ("I thought it was great!"), but Mrs. Tyler said, "Raise your hand if you have anything you'd like to say about this story" (16/p.16). In another example, when a child had completed his reading of a story, Precious called out, "Mrs. Smith!"

Mrs.S:	If you have a comment or question for Mark, raise your hand.
Precious:	Ms. Smith! (again)
Mrs.S:	No, you can't just talk out, Precious. Lisa? (calling on Lisa) (42/p.8)

During a questioning session about a story a child had been reading, Mrs. Tyler used this strategy, somewhat more explicitly, to teach Leon to raise his hand before responding. She asked the children questions related to the story another child had just shared.

- Intern: But he [i.e., the child who just shared] says--how did he make it so it wasn't so scary? What did he say that was not so scary?
What did he say? He said something to the children.
- Leon: Don't be afraid.
- Intern: Raise you hand if you know what he said. (pause) Leon.
- Leon: Don't be afraid.
- Intern: Why--don't be afraid because?
- Leon: Travis [i.e., the scary character in the story was just Travis].
- Intern: It's just Travis, thank you. (Lots of voices.) Oh, that's all.
We're done with share day. (15/p.18)

Teachers also used the strategy of ignoring the unwanted or inappropriate response. Occasionally, Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Tyler would interrupt the child and continue the book discussion as if the comment had not been made. The teachers would also use the strategy of resuming or continuing the read-aloud over the voice of the child, so as to drown out the comment (e.g., 27/ p.5 and p.15).

If, however, the child's response was acceptable to the teacher, in both content and method of delivery, the teachers used several strategies to validate those responses. On some occasions, the teacher would write the comment down on chart paper and use it as part of an activity (10/p.7), thank the child directly (e.g., "Thank you, Mark. That was great" [14/p.5]), or repeat the comment back to the child and the class in an affirmative tone of voice. The teachers also used the comments "very good," "that's nice," and "yes" to affirm children's comments. As I analyzed the teachers' use of these affirming words, I found that the children who received these comments were predominantly White. Leon and Travis also received these comments, but the other African American children received them very infrequently.

Summary. I offer these patterns of expectations and interaction to begin making explicit how reading and writing time operated in this research setting. In fact, I saw these thoughtful teachers use many teaching strategies *I* used when I was a classroom teacher. I, too, had read over someone's comment when a child failed to raise a hand first, retaught rules for participation, dismissed (what I perceived to be) irrelevant comments, and insisted on children staying in their seats. And I engaged in these practices in an effort, I thought, to teach children the codes for participation in outside society. When children from Latresa and Precious's cultural backgrounds entered the classroom setting, however, their behaviors were very different from those of the White middle-class children whose parents (or families or communities) had socialized them to behave in ways congruent with the expectations of the teachers. As a result, most of the reteaching these children received in read-alouds served to marginalize them more than it helped them internalize the participation codes. Instead, some children, including David, began developing identities as troublemakers. The discrepancies in opportunity will become more obvious as we explore a few children in depth in the following case study chapters.

Two Types of Response

Spontaneous response. As I analyzed the ways children were responding to the literature in the classroom, I discovered two kinds of responses being given. First, most children responded in ways that seemed spontaneous. That is, the comments were not preceded by a direct question from the teacher or the result of a teacher-directed activity. Ways in which children in the class spontaneously responded included the following:

- moving to the story
- (the following can be categorized as either "calling out" or "elicited talk")

- remembering a story
- responding to illustrations
- asking a question to follow up on conversation
- comparing the story to one's own life
- criticizing the reader
- making observations regarding text--letter and/or words
- adding background historical information
- orally trying to make sense of a story
- repeating a line from a story or book
- answering characters in stories and saying/predicting next line,
uninvited
- using the vocabulary of the teacher's response
- efferent use of a story--application
- holding onto books
- showing pictures
- touching books
- writing stories or drawing pictures related to books or classmates' group-
shared writing
- comparing someone's story to another book
- sharing a book (e.g., during "share time"--equivalent to "show and tell")
- using a pretend "reading" voice while holding a book
- holding a private conversation about the book
- trading/exchanging books
- picking up books to read--initiating a reading

Different groups of children engaged in these behaviors with greater frequency than others. I will elaborate on these behaviors in more detail in Chapter Eight and in descriptions of case study participants.

Teacher structured response activities. The teacher-directed responses, however, were much more plentiful. The teachers in this class created a response environment in which children would need to engage in particular kinds of behaviors in order to remain in the group and to secure speaking turns. In addition to controlling the prerequisites for oral response, the teachers also managed the content of the conversations. In fact, the teachers guided students through discussions in ways that, to some extent, silenced some of the students. In order to make it easier to understand the responses of the case study children, I report the ways in which the teachers used directed activities to channel or foster the responses of children during reading time.

Questioning. The first, and largest, category of teacher involvement in response was the teachers' use of questioning. As teachers read aloud from books--and as students shared their own writing from journals--the teachers would stop the reading periodically to ask questions. My findings suggest that teachers' questions were primarily efferent in nature (even when the teachers themselves did not perceive this to be the case), requiring students to provide answers based on their comprehension of the material being read and/or their comprehension of the story structure being taught at that time. For instance, after reading a chapter from *Little House in the Big Woods* (Wilder, 1960). Mrs. Smith questioned students about how Pa's fiddle was used.

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Ms. S: | What did it [i.e., the fiddle] do for his family? |
| Melinda: | It played music. |
| Ms. S: | No, but --that's right but-- |
| Sam: | It played songs. |
| Ms. S: | That's right. Pa's fiddle was special because it played songs--
(pause) |

- Sam: For the children to calm down and go to bed.
 Ms. S: For the children to calm down and go to bed. And he played songs for the grown ups to do what?
 Latresa: Dance.
 Ms.S.: Dance. Mark?
 Mark: I was going to say that. (35/p.15)

The teachers also engaged in an activity--demonstrated somewhat in the preceding passage--I call "fishing." During "fishing," the teacher asked efferent questions to which she wanted the correct answer, and she probed students until she got the desired answer. An example of how fishing happened during a discussion of story structure follows. Tiffany, a first grader, had been reading her story to the class. She told her story in a voice with the timing of real "reading." She, with the help of Mrs. Smith, "read" the title of the story, said that it was Travis' birthday, that he would "pick some people," and that the people would go home from the party. She advanced to the next page.

- Ms.S (to T): Go ahead.
 Tiffany: ("reading") And their name was Trevor Tiffany.
 Ms.S: Well, I think you've got--what part of a story did she do today?
 Latresa: A birthday party.
 Ms.S: But what part of a story--a beginning, the middle, or the end? Chris? (She's calling on Chris.)
 Billy: The beginning.
 Ms.S: Chris, Chris, what part do you think? Give Chris a chance to think.
 Chris: The beginning?
 Ms.S: The beginning or the middle or the end of the story today?
 Chris: The beginning?
 Tiffany: This is the end where everybody go home. (interrupting to assist)
 Ms.S: But if this is the part about people going home, what part would be missing, Precious?
 Tiffany: (interrupting) You got to draw the people.
 Ms.S: But what else should we know about before they go home?
 Precious: The middle.
 Ms.S: The middle, of course-- What happens at the party? Thank you. (And Mrs. Smith calls on the next child to share his story.) (42/p.11)

Efferent questions dominated the teachers' exchanges with students.

Sometimes the questions were related to curriculum the children had studied (e.g., "Where does the St. Johns River go?" [07/p.4]; "What does Lois Ehlert always do at the back of the book?" [07/p.7]) or to parts of the story the children had already heard read to them (e.g., "When she went to the Secret River, were there fish there? . . . So when she caught them, what did she do with them?" [35/p.18]), or to compare something they were reading with a book they had read before (e.g., "Were the illustrations in this book like the illustrations in one of *these* books? . . . How is it different?" [34/pp.10-11]). When I analyzed how students responded to these efferent questions, the children who followed the appropriate protocol for answering them (e.g., sitting still, raising hands, waiting to be called upon) were predominantly White or included Leon and Travis.

The teachers also infused the discussions with other, more open-ended kinds of questions, although fewer in number. Mrs. Tyler often asked students to predict what might happen next (e.g., 07/p.07; 10/p.6; 16/p.3; 26/p.17; 27/p.3; 29/p.11; 30/p.13) in a story or to elaborate on a character's motives (e.g., 26/p.17). I found that these questions, although not recall-based in nature, were still answered more frequently by White students than by African American students. Even after a local, African American grandmother from Precious' housing project read the African American version of *'Twas the Night B'fore Christmas* (Rosales, 1996), only White children volunteered to answer the reader's (efferent) questions following the reading *despite* the fact that several of the African American children remained after the reading to look at the book with her and talk with her. The difference in students' participation may be related to the method of answering direct questions from the teacher rather than the content of the stories.

Fill-in-the-blank. The teachers also used a strategy I call "fill-in-the-blank."

The fill-in-the-blank strategy involved the teacher reading a story to children and stopping part of the way through a passage, pausing, and allowing children to verbally respond with the word or words that would logically follow. In my analyses, this domain grew larger than I initially imagined based on my observational evidence in the classroom. I also believe that the use of this strategy--in which children could respond verbally without following the procedures of hand raising and waiting for verbal recognition--could have promoted confusion for students who did not generally follow the protocol during other questioning periods. The following excerpts from read-alouds suggest the pattern of the fill-in-the-blank technique.

Intern reads "my--" pauses, waits

Class: Tree! (07/p.7)

I: All right, this is called the Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of--(pause)

Latresa: Anything!

Class: Not afraid of anything. (17/p.7)

(Teacher reading *Kinda Blue*) . . . tall cornstalks, pulled off an ear of corn and handed it back to me. Still wrapped in its green--(she pauses for them to respond)

Devon: Clothes.

Ms.S: What's the outside part?

Mark: Ears.

Ms.S: Mary?

Mary: Husks.

Ms.S: Husks, Right. (27/p.5)

(Mrs. Smith reads on...) "The pink rose floated for a few minutes and then sank slowly down ...a huge catfish tried to swallow that pink paper rose and was hauled out of the river on the end of Calpernia's--

Ms.S. and Sam: Fishing hook. (34/p.15)

These fill-in-the-blank experiences were met with enthusiasm from most of the children in the class, regardless of ethnicity. However, for students who found the

procedures for answering traditionally-asked questions foreign, these fill-in-the-blank response experiences added further confusion for them as they sought to participate appropriately in the school read-aloud experience. Some of the fill-in-the-blank experiences were potentially confusing for children since not all exchanges which looked like they would be open for all students to answer actually were.

Intern: ...People should not do what, MJ?

MJ: Fight.

Intern: Fight with each other. He said there were peaceful ways to solve--

Kids: Problems. (37/p.3)

Notice that the intern's first fill-in-the-blank was followed by a direct address for only one student to answer while the second was open to all. Such inconsistency made the rules for participation hard to consistently discern. While calling out was encouraged for fill-in-the-blanks, it was discouraged during questioning. For children learning the rules of appropriate participation, the contradictory expectations made it harder for them to negotiate validated talk.

Structured activities. Although the teachers had no time in their schedule for literature groups (an unfortunate modification made to the schedule after I initiated this study and against the teachers' will), they did make efforts to connect the literature studies with other areas of the curriculum. During farming readings, a bulletin board boasted a huge scarecrow and samples of the children's farm-related writing. As mentioned earlier, the teachers organized a class trip to observe the work on a farm. Other structured response activities the teachers organized for the children included taking turns to make up parts to a retold story (03/p.04), using flannel cut outs to reconstruct a story (07/p.10), constructing leaf animals as connected to a story with similar illustrations (08/p.5), making lists of students' predictions for a story (09/p.18), acting out a story, such as *Mole's Hill* (Ehlert, 1994) (10/p.10), researching biographical information on characters in biographies (14/p.15), playing Bingo with

vocabulary from a story (14/p.16), and designing a variety of art projects constructed to connect with content from stories, including aquarium making and portrait drawing (11/p.18; 29/p.9), and eating ethnic food related to a story (30/p.12). Children's participation in these activities was highly dictated by the teacher, so I did not analyze these activities with the same intensity that I examined those that were more spontaneous or student-initiated. I did not find any of these teacher-directed activities were designed in response to a prompt by any student in the class. Instead, they remained teacher-controlled and did not yield many unsolicited examples of response.

A practice with possibilities. I asked the teacher, on a few occasions, to read aloud a book I had selected, and I requested that she pause after reading each page to allow for spontaneous comments. Using this method, the teacher read *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* (Miller, 1994), *Kinda Blue* (Grifalconi, 1993), and *The Story of Ruby Bridges* (Coles, 1995). The degree of African American student participation in these read-aloud sessions was remarkable, especially when compared to the number of speaking turns these same children acquired when engaging in the efferent question and answer sessions the teachers normally used (see protocols 27, 41, and 43). The time required for these sessions, however, caused the read-alouds to extend well beyond the allocated time for reading and resulted in the teacher having to rush through the mathematics and explore periods at the end of the day. I also used this method in my small group reading sessions with the focus-study students although the teacher did not continue to employ it with the whole class. When reading the last book, *The Story of Ruby Bridges* (Coles, 1995), the teacher periodically paused for student comments and allowed comments at the conclusion of the story.

Ms. S: Do you have any comments about this story?

Leon: I like that--read it again.

Ms. S.: What did you like about it?

Leon: Because she went into the door. [He means that the child in the

- story was brave enough to enter the door of the all-White school against the wishes of a mean, racist crowd.]
- Ms. S: She was very brave, don't you think? It would be scary to walk through a large crowd of people who were yelling and pointing at you and even shaking things at you--like they wanted to really hurt you.
- Lauren: Or like they were gonna kill you.
- Ms. S: That's right, like they were gonna kill you. Lisa?
- Lisa: Why would they do that?
- Ms. S: What do you think?
- Lisa: Because they thought the Black people weren't safe.
- Ms. S: Okay, I think that might have been true.
- Mary: Because they don't like the color; she's different.
- Ms. S: She's different; they were afraid. Travis?
- Travis: They be tellin her 'Go back to Africa' and stuff like that. . . .
- [Note: This information is not in the story.]
- Ms. S: Why do you think people act like that?
- Billy: It's not good.
- Ms. S: It's NOT good, but why do you think they do that, Billy?
- Billy: --cause they don't like Black people going to they school.
- Ms. S: But why?
- Billy: Because they didn't want nobody to come to the school--only white people, and the teacher. . .
- Ms. S: If you don't like somebody or something, what makes you feel that way? (lengthy pause) You don't know? You'd better figure it out because these people had a problem.
- [Conversation continues](43/pp.12-13)

During the more open discussions such as these, children's developing understandings of both literature and ethnic issues became evident. In most of the stories with African American protagonists, the main character faced some form of discrimination (e.g., racial, gender) or adverse circumstances. The stories prompted especially strong discussions in the class when the teacher would read the story with pauses at the end of each page.

I was amazed at the ways in which the White students talked about race. For instance, in the conversation described above, Lauren suggested that in her school the principal would never stand for such discrimination. "There are a lot of people--here," she began. "Our principal wouldn't do that. Black people are people, too" (43/p.13).

A few moments later, Mary and Chris were trying to turn the discussion into one about slavery and the underground railroad--a topic their class had studied the year before. The idea of modern racial tensions escaped them, even though they were living it in their own classroom. For instance, after reading Rosales' (1996) *'Twas the Night B'fore Christmas* (a story with an African American Santa Claus) the grandmother-reader paused to ask the children questions. She asked a few efferent questions (e.g., "Which reindeer is missing?"), and all of her volunteers--20 to 30 hands up in the air--were White children. Next, she approached the issue of Santa's race.

Grandmother: What's the difference in this Santa Claus and the one we're used to seeing?

Child: The color of the skin.

Grandmother: How many of you believe in Santa?

Chris: (interrupts) Is he REALLY black or white? I want him to be white.

Kaley: I want him to be purple.

Several other children say they want him to be white. (I sense a bit of panic.) (31/p.10)

Race, however infrequently discussed in explicit conversation, was an issue of importance in the reading community. However, time for spontaneous comments encouraged some talk about race as an issue of significance. Mrs. Smith observed the contradiction between the explicit racial understandings children articulated in the literature discussions and the White children's implicit racial feelings evident in behaviors at other times of day. She explained to me, "They know the right answers" (48/p.3) when discussing race in literature and suggested children might be caught between "one understanding [about race] at school and another one at home" (p.2). She wondered aloud if, with more time for multicultural literature and authentic discussions, she would have been able to "lick that problem."

Summary

In this chapter, I attempt to capture the nature of the community within which children in Mrs. Smith's class were responding to literature and children's writing. It was a community which remained ethnically segregated despite the teacher's and intern's many efforts to create a racially harmonious and heterogeneous learning community. At a first glance, the classroom does appear to be as integrated as the school population figures suggest, but a longer examination of peer relationships and status shows otherwise. This study's African American children were marginalized in silent ways in a class where students and teachers rarely spoke of race. They were marginalized because their behaviors sometimes ran counter to school norms and made them undesirable as playmates for White children, and they were marginalized because their culturally-influenced behaviors were not easily perceived as "response" when traditional read-aloud practices were used. In this study, the practice of building in time for allowing spontaneous story comments seemed to increase the amount of validated response from African American students, especially those children who most struggled to "fit" in the culture of school.

CHAPTER 6

PRECIOUS' RESPONSES TO READ-ALOUDS AND GROUP-SHARED WRITING

Introduction

In this chapter, I will describe how Precious responded to read-alouds and classmates' group-shared writing in her writings, comments, and other actions that demonstrate her literacy. I will also explain how her responses seem to link with her ethnicity, her sense of personal identity, and her feelings about the peer group within her Friendship Program classroom. I chose to describe the experiences of two case-study students, Precious and Leon, because they represent low-income, African American, academically talented students. I evaluated Precious' and Leon's status as "academically talented" by listening to Mrs. Smith's descriptions of them, observing their reading group placements, and examining Precious' achievement test scores. Such data were not available on Leon, a kindergartner.

Background

I noticed Precious on her very first day of kindergarten, a year before I began the current study. She was alert and lively in the classroom, and she demonstrated behaviors which made her seem, initially at least, like she was still learning how to "do" school. Lining up, raising her hand, honoring the dominant culture's view of the appropriate social distance between her and the next person--these and other norms of classroom participation all seemed foreign to her. Within days, I observed that she became a keen watcher of the activities of those "in the know"--her classroom teacher and other, more experienced students. She was bright and a quick academic learner.

She progressed quickly in her reading and mathematics skills, and Mrs. Smith soon commented on her remarkable academic progress.

Her social skills remained, however, different from what the teacher expected from students. Her active (sometimes disruptive) behaviors presented problems for her throughout her kindergarten year, and she was often moved to a neighboring table during floor activities or sent to sit alone to cool off during angry spells. Mrs. Smith, conscious of how necessary it would be for Precious to learn the norms of classroom interaction, stayed committed to noticing when Precious would have a "good day" and soliciting her help with leadership activities. She spoke often of the progress she saw in Precious and questioned what she could do to meet Precious' needs better than she was. I noticed Precious' strong sense of humor. She sometimes, indirectly, joked with me as demonstrated in the following excerpt from a lunch discussion.

(I'm seated at the lunch table with Tiffany, a NP, Precious, Travis, and Leon.)
We've been talking about busses--how they get home [from school]--and Precious says that Tiffany sometimes takes the car and sometimes takes the bus. She says, "Always kids be fighting on that bus," and reports that Latresa got in a fight on the bus that morning.

Jeane: Do White people ride that bus?

Precious: No!!! (in disbelief, as if she wondered why I would even ask)

Jeane: The bus driver? (raised eyebrows)

Precious: Yes. (Smiles at me) (36/p.6)

In her first year, Precious' peer group had been, almost exclusively, the girls from her neighborhood. Latresa, Tiffany, and Precious entered kindergarten in the same year and were already friends outside of the classroom. During the year of the current study, however, Precious' situation changed. First, her academic improvement and maturity level fostered an awkwardness in her relationship with Tiffany and Latresa. She had moved well beyond them in her reading ability and was put into a more advanced reading group for "skills" instruction. When the girls did gather for play experiences, Precious began taking a leadership role--becoming almost motherly

toward her same-age friends--and quickly tired of their silliness. In her general classroom behavior, however, she continued to show signs of unfamiliarity with the culture of school. She still received verbal redirectives or behavior consequences with some regularity. Therefore, although she did not fit well with her prior group of peers, she was also not acceptable to the other female peer group in her class and, as I have noted before, spent a considerable amount of time on her own. She also had been reunited with her mother, who had been in a rehabilitation program for a lengthy period of time while Precious and her sibling were raised by a father. The return of her mother seemed to coincide with the period of Precious' most remarkable academic growth.

Precious' parents both worked full-time--her mother in telemarketing and her father in construction. Her mother had traveled extensively ("I have lived in 27 states," she told me), and her father was from a Caribbean island. Precious and her brother attended inexpensive after school care because of their parents' long work schedules. Upon arriving home, around 5:30 in the afternoon, Precious would then be free to go to the courtyard or a friend's apartment (usually Latresa's) to play. Although her mother did not like the living conditions or the neighborhood children, she had little energy to entertain Precious after school, so Precious had plenty of opportunities to play with the neighborhood children and be exposed to the community's social norms. Her mother agreed that her at-home playmates were the same ones as at school. She conceded, "I realize she's got to have friends, but she realizes that she can't just hang out. Like Latresa, not everyone parents like me." During the time that her mother had been gone, Precious had engaged in play with neighborhood children often, but her mother was currently trying, slowly, to begin limiting Precious' contact with her neighborhood friends. (Precious' stories from the previous school year often included Latresa and true adventures such as going to the

mall or the movies with Latresa and her family.) One visible sign of the influence of Precious' peer group was the Black English Vernacular (BEV) that occasionally surfaced when she spoke. Her mother's speech, however, did not possess traces of BEV, even though she considered herself a Southerner.

Precious' family also considered themselves Afro-American and subscribed to a moderately conservative religious faith. They regularly attended a non-denominational church and believed that both parents should share in household responsibilities. Ideally, Precious' mother explained, "The man should be the provider, but we both work." Precious' name was derived from her father's, and she and her siblings were purposely given the same initials. I have a sense, from her mother's background, that the culture of the local community (i.e., the housing project) was unfamiliar to her--something unlike the conditions in which she grew up--but that she was resigned to living there until their financial situation improved. At the time of this study, even with both parents working, Precious' family still qualified for public assistance. The parents made the children's needs a priority with the little money they were able to scrape together, purchasing a used computer for Precious and her brother and ensuring that the children each had their own bedroom furniture.

Precious considered herself a reader. She was aware of her emerging status as a good student, particularly in reading and writing. I liked her immensely, and she was also aware of that. She would often approach me when I entered the classroom, informing me of her most recent journal entries. When I left, she would frequently want to know how soon I would be back. Precious' mother was proud of her daughter's academic growth. She sent Mrs. Smith notes on report card slips, indicating her pleasure at Precious' progress. Her mother shared her observations with me.

(Commenting on her daughter's academic progress)

Precious' mother: She likes to read. Likes it when I take her to the library. She likes to ask how to add or subtract. She's always running around with a pencil and a crayon. Her room is all her artwork from school. She also likes to watch the PBS station. And she gets a Barney magazine in the mail every two months. She likes when she gets that. (05/23/98)

Precious' mother provided many opportunities for her daughter to participate in literate culture. First, she supported her daughter's literacy by giving her access to books, taking her to the library, and ordering a magazine for her. When, during the school year, Precious' older sister moved out of the apartment Precious shared with her parents and older brother, Precious' mother allowed her to decorate her new "own" room with her drawings and paintings from school. On her door hung one of the pictures that the Friendship Program teachers had taken of her at school, and Precious' school art projects covered the walls. Precious told me that she was allowed to watch the "learning channel" at home and that her mother read to her. She explained that her father didn't read to her because "I don't think he went to school" (36/p.6). Indeed, according to her mother, Precious' father grew up in a community where written literacy and schooling were not priorities. Precious, the mother explained, could be "her father's teacher." I found that Precious' mother exerted a strong influence on her daughter's skyrocketing academic achievement.

If she wants to learn, she's gonna learn. Since I've been home--since the last quarter of kindergarten and all of first grade--I've taught her to sound out words. She likes to read. When she gets home, she always reads books. She might be reading and start asking me, 'How do you say this?' or that. Curious. I read to her sometimes, and her brother reads, too. (5/23/98).

During the course of the study, Precious explicitly defined herself in the following ways:

- pretty (40/p.5)
- a learner (40/p.5)
- not a baby (35/pp.9-10)
- good at writing (11/p.6)

different from me (Jeane) (28/pp.4-5)
a reader (03/p.10)

Implicitly, she defined herself as an achiever in other ways. First, she identified herself with children who attempted invented spelling in order to write challenging words in journals. In one lunchtime conversation, I asked the children a general, "So what have you all been writing?" question. Precious responded by mentioning that a nonparticipant did a lot of writing. The nonparticipant, sitting nearby, agreed. Then, however, Precious qualified her statement by noting that the other child only wrote "easy words--that he knows" (36/p.6) to which the other child protested that he did, indeed, sound them out. She participated in a group that made academic risk-taking a socially acceptable activity.

She also identified herself as someone who would not want to be "dumb" but would instead want access to literacy. Following the reading of *The Story of Ruby Bridges* (Coles, 1995), a book about an African-American child who attended school alone after White families removed their children from the newly-integrated elementary school, Mrs. Smith asked the children to speculate on why some adults would want Black children not to be able to go to school. Karen compared it to the days of slavery, when slaves were forbidden to read.

- Ms.S: But why? If you were a slaveowner, you wouldn't allow your slaves to learn to read. There was a reason? (She uses inflection of question.) Precious?
- Precious: They just wanted slaves to be dumb.
- Ms.S: Say that again. What do you think?
- Precious: They didn't want them to go to school.
- Ms.S: Dumb is kind of what happens if you don't read. On the other side of the coin, if you read, what good things will happen to you?
- Precious: You'll be smarter, and you can read, and you won't be dumb.
- Ms.S: And then you can do whatever you want to do, isn't that right? (Billy, NP, and Leon's hands go up)

- Ms.S: And some people at this time, still felt that way. They did not want (pause)--they were worried.
- Precious: I wouldn't want to be dumb. (43/p.13)

Precious perceived herself as an achiever and a reader, and she clearly understood the value of education. Her mother explained, "I don't know where she gets it (i.e., her academic talent). I tell her--even though she's seven--if you want to have nice things, a nice car, you have to go to college" (49/p.2). Being a reader and writer made Precious feel good about herself.

Her social behaviors, however, presented obstacles Precious dealt with daily as she lived between cultures. Precious remained volatile. Although she was much more reserved than some of her African American classmates, such as Billy and David, she exhibited behaviors that alienated her from her White classmates. I observed Precious confront the codes of classroom norms by hitting other children (11/p.4; 27/p.11), borrowing things belonging to other children (07/p.14; 09/p.17), and using a loud voice in the classroom. These activities happened on an almost-daily basis, although she experienced differing degrees of success in attempting to control herself from day to day. When she *was* able to control her physical reactions to other children, though, she internalized her frustrations and would appear sad, withdrawn, and sometimes remove herself from peers and sob. It was as if she did not know how to cope with her emotions in the absence of her former strategies. I observed Precious struggling between value systems one afternoon during Explore time.

Notes on Precious. She and her group work with the Geoboards. For some reason, she gets upset and dumps all the cubes off of her own geoboard. Then she pulls away the cubes Sam has sorted for using on his board--just reaches over and takes them all. [Sam] protests. "You shouldn't do that," he says, but she doesn't respond. Latresa steps in, pouring out more cubes from the other bucket for them to use. But she pours too many and starts to put some back into the bucket. But every time Latresa puts a handful into the bucket, Precious turns the bucket over and dumps them right back out. They repeat

this at least five times before I can talk Latresa out of trying it again. Precious is crying, and her head is down, and she won't talk to me. So I leave.

When I'm at the other table, she comes over to me. "No one will help me clean up," she says. I tell her that it's hard to clean up if you keep dumping the bucket each time you get started. She agrees to not pour out the bucket. I help. I sit beside her on the floor. She starts a new pattern. Seems better. Latresa grabs the "extra" board for me [inviting me to play, too] but I don't use it. Then Precious decides she needs more yellow cubes, so she takes a handful of Sam's--again. But when I tell her "I think those were Sam's, and you have some of your own right here. Don't you think it would be a nice idea to give them back to Sam?" she does. [A year ago, she wouldn't have done it, I don't think. I wonder about my researcher role and the adult role I'm taking here.] (09/p.17)

What surprised me was that Precious did appear to aspire to add the White peer group to her network of friends. Initially, I considered Precious to be making an unconscious effort, via her behaviors, to define herself as different from the White peer group. Although I cannot completely rule out this possibility on the basis of my speculation, I sense that it would be an incomplete evaluation to portray her as doing that. Instead, I found that Precious demonstrated her desire to join the White peer group several times.

During one conversation with classmates, the White girls sitting at her table began discussing their friends.

(In her group, Mary is talking about being in Brownies and who else is in it with her. She names Melinda, Lisa, and a White NP from another class.)

Precious: (interrupting) I'm in Brownies.

Mary: No you're not.

Precious: I'm gonna be.

Mary: (looks surprised) In Miss Beth's class?!

(There is no more discussion of Brownies at all. The conversation ends.)

(28/p.5)

On another day, when Precious was playing alone, I asked her about her friends. I deliberately asked her about this when Latresa and Tiffany were not present. She listed her friends for me, in the following order: "Devon, Lisa, Mary, Latresa, Tiffany, Pat, Karen." Precious' perception of herself as part of the White girls' peer group

helped me to understand how Precious used her written responses to read-alouds and group-shared writing as a vehicle for participating in the White girls' community.

Written Response

Group-shared writing time was the only time of day (other than show and tell) when the children had the attention of both their teachers and their classmates. After a child would share a piece of writing, he or she received the oral responses of classmates. Interactions in these group-shared writing times differed from those during other times of day, namely because children from different peer groups would respond to one another's stories--interacting in ways unlike their recess or lunchtime patterns. The group-shared writing period provided a time for the breaking of social boundaries between readers and listeners.

Patterns of Written Response in the Class

Early in the study, Lisa began writing stories in response to the literature the teachers were using in a unit on Lois Ehlert. She composed and shared stories such as "Cheese for Lunch" (based on *Feathers for Lunch*, Elhert, 1990), and "The Bad, Bad Squirrel" (based on *Nuts to You*, Ehlert, 1993) in class. What began as Lisa's way of using shared knowledge of these stories to build her classmates' interest in her own writing soon became a fad in the class. Pat, Mary, and Karen, shortly thereafter, drafted their own versions of the stories. Mary wrote a story about another bad squirrel, and called it "Orange." Pat began writing about the read-aloud story Mrs. Tyler had been reading. The book, *Paddle to the Sea* (Holling, 1941/1969), was read, a chapter a day, to the class. Pat soon wrote "Sail to the Sea" [*sic*], a story incorporating the characters, settings, and experiences of Paddle. Karen, too, soon wrote a story about the "Five Great Lakes" as well as a "Pattle to Sea" [*sic*]. Karen's and Pat's story introductions follow:

Pat's "Sail to the Sea"

wien patl sails to the see. onse upon a time there was a littl boy namnd James he sall a indin in a book and he desited to crv a littl indin in a bowl [bowl scratched out and "canoe" written above it in teacher's writing]. (Chapter title "When Paddle Sails to the Sea" Once upon a time there was a little boy named James. He saw an Indian in a book, and he decided to carve a little Indian in a canoe.)

Karen's "Pattle to Sea"

once there was a Little Boy NameD Jon and he krvaD a ineDin anD a Bot At the Botme of the Bot he saiD put me Back in the wart and. Put him in the wart anD Began to srts his jrny (Once there was a little boy named Jon and he carved an Indian and a boat. At the bottom of the boat, he said, "Put me back in the water" and put him in the water and began to start his journey.)

Mrs. Smith remarked to me that she had never observed students engaging in so much literature-related writing.

This literature-related writing soon became a way for the White girls to bond with one another. They used their "explore" time to write puppet plays based on their stories, and co-wrote stories (e.g., Pat and Karen composed "The Bad, Bad Squirrel and the Raccoon") which were later posted on the walls and performed for classmates. In time, they also wrote one another into their stories as characters. The White girls' peer group engaged in two kinds of unique writing--first, they wrote stories based on books they had read or the stories shared by peers. Second, they wrote stories that included their friends in them as characters. The trend became more obvious after Mrs. Tyler read the children the book *Mole's Hill* (Ehlert, 1994).

Lisa generally began the writing trends. After *Mole's Hill*, she composed a story entitled, "Cat Hill." This story was such a hit with the class that I observed Mary, the very next day, working on a "Cat's Hill" story of her own. Lisa's story did not contain the names of friends; instead, the many characters were named by the animals represented in the book. The following is the introduction to her story.

Cat hill

one day the was a littl hill in the woods. All the animals called it cat hill because EVERY DaY all the cats wood come to the hill and eat and play olny cats were alaod But one day cat came to the pond and smiled and siad I do not like to be a cat.

Mary's version was similar, but not the same.

Cats hill

cat dig and dig and she made a big hill. The (fox--drawn as placeholder) onteid to go to the tpoonde but we cantn dade the (fox) because yourhill is in the waye so you will have to move your hill.

Curious about the similarities and the sequence of their writing, I asked them about their story writing.

(Lisa shares her story "Cat Hill" with me--she wants to read me all of it.)

Jeane: What made you want to write this story?

Lisa: Because I just know a book that was called "Mole Hill," and my favorite animals are cats--and then I wanted to write "Cat Hill," and I started it.

Jeane: How does it feel to write long stories?

Lisa: I don't feel so tired. I just keep writing and writing. It was nine pages.

(Mary has been watching me with Melinda and Lisa. She stands beside me with her journal and puts it out for me to see just as Lisa finishes. Mary's story is called "Cat's Hill." She shows me part of the story she just wrote.)

Jeane: When did you write it?

Mary: When Lisa said she was going to write about Cat Hill--and I wanted to do it too, but it ended up like Mole Hill. And I did it the same as Mole Hill. So I wanted to do it just like that--but it's kind of different. And I made the flowers. (15/p.3)

The girls shared a social bond as they worked on their stories, even creating illustrations like the book's and one another's pictures. Another White student composed his own "Hill" story, also. In addition to writing stories based on literature and classmates' writing, the children also wrote stories in chapters and increased the length of their stories. The children in the class often marveled at the length of multipage stories. David remarked, during Mary's reading, "She got a *long* story"

(25/p.5), and Billy peeked over Devon's shoulder as he shared a story, saying, "Oh, this is a lot of pages."

Precious' Connections With Class Patterns

Two sessions after Mary shared her story, Precious shared her own version of "Lisa's Hill" with the class. Her story contained most of the same characters as Lisa's original story, but she also named White children and included Shade. During the following weeks, Precious wrote two more "Hill" stories, including "Precious' Hill," which she shared with the class. Precious' versions (like the others written by classmates following Lisa and Mary's stories) contained the names of classmates. The following are the introductions to her stories.

Precious hill

Is you playing weth shade and devon was Lisa Yes! Tha was playing duk duk gos.

Lisa hill

noe uppe a tom Lisa is a cat. Devon is a dog. Shade is a fox. Lisa sad Im the cat of this hill Devon sad it is not your hill. . . .

In time, after Pat's "Sail to the See" and Karen's "Pattle to Sea" [*sic*] were shared, Precious wrote her own "Great Lakes" piece in which she made reference to a character similar to Paddle. After Lisa and Pat began sharing stories divided into chapters, Precious also began composing stories in chapters, a phenomenon signified by having to "turn the page" while sharing with the class.

IM GOinG To PLAY TO DaY WiTH MOM AnD DaD Anb Lyle.
HibenIgoSeeK is Fun.

(next page) I sab IM tiyou of PLAY HibeinGoSeeK.

(next page) IMgoing to PLaY HibeAnDGoSeek (teacher's writing adds "again.")

[I'm going to play today with mom and dad and Lyle. Hide and go seek is fun. I said I'm tired of playing hide and go seek. I'm going to play hide and go seek again.]

In addition to chaptering, Precious also followed the genre of interactive writing. Early in the year, Lisa shared a story that was "kind of like Clifford, but it's cats" (03/p.3), and invited students to interact through questioning. On each page, the illustration of the cat grew larger, ("On Monday, the kitten was as big as a dog. . . . On Thursday, he was as big as a teacher. . . .") and at the end of reading each page, Lisa asked, "Now is he as big as a house?" to which the children would respond as a group. Lisa also composed a story which contained a song written to the tune of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm," and the children joined her in telling the story. Soon, Precious wrote an "I Spy" page on which she drew several pictures and wrote "I spy a grl." She then invited the children in the class to find the picture of the girl she had "spied." When she shared her "I Spy" pieces, both African American and White children interacted with her. She wrote six "I Spy" pieces, and was always anxious to share.

When Precious began including classmates as characters in her stories, she named almost the same people as Lisa, Karen, and Mary had included in their stories. Mary and Karen named White children, exclusively, as characters in their stories (with the exception of a story in which Karen named every classmate by copying from a list of names posted on the wall). Lisa included Leon and David each once in her stories, but the remainder of her characters mirrored her playtime peer group. A representative story sample follows:

(from Karen's journal)

Onec a log time ago there was two hores name Pat and Karen they owes played togoter they had so mcha fun they never brok up. They played all over th pin. Pat and karen played and plaed. There firmed Mary came they in vited her in. Aad eat food one day they ran awy becaes someone open the gaet of the hores. The hores got lost on the roed. Mary was about to git out but the look they lock the pin back up Mary tryed to jup up over. Whin Pat and Karen saw that Mary wasn't there. The weit back to git her. They thered (turned) a raned (around). Pat try to open the gat but she coledit open so Karen did she

got it for Mary and the wiet. They got to go to a far someone hade tock them home and there names was Lisa and (White female nonparticipant from another class). . . .

In Precious' stories, she included Karen, Lisa, and Mary several times as characters, but she also named Latresa, Tyler, and a nonparticipating white male student. Strikingly, she composed one story about her "best friends" and named these children (in the following order) as her friends: Latresa, Mary, Karen.

Although the White girls' choice of peer characters included only their friends, Precious' choice of peer characters, including those identified as best friends, included the White girls but fewer African American girls. Her selection of children, children who reappeared in many writing samples, demonstrates a social response to the stories of her classmates--and a desire to join that peer group. She also included Lisa as the main protagonist in many of her stories. In the following story, it looks like she and the teacher dialogued before she embarked on the writing.

1234 Its comen for you in me
 [--Teacher writing--What is coming for you and me?]
 a spas spp
 [--Teacher writing--Who is on the spaceship?]
 Lisa is on thespac ship
 take us up t the sky (illustration of spaceship)
 Is Lisa an alien? Yes. By Precious

Another writing sample combined her peer connections with a response to *Little House in the Big Woods* (Wilder, 1960). Pat, Karen, and Melinda had written stories with a strong "Little House" influence (e.g, they make snow candy, they called the fathers "Pa") when Precious composed the following story.

I like my frebans (friends). Latresa Mary Kren they are playing
 Beeing Prrg hot (Bean porridge hot)
 Beeing Prrg Cob (Bean porridge cold)
 nin days old
 I lik it hot
 I lik it cod
 I like it in a pot n bays old (nine days old)

The rhyme had been included in a play the class was performing addressing life on the prairie and was in the book Mrs. Smith was reading to them.

Precious was attentive to how her work related to the work of others in her class. I asked her about the *Mole's Hill* take-offs in an interview.

(We're reviewing the portfolio, and she's flipping through the pages.)

Precious: Now this is--I wanna read this one. "Lisa's Hill."
"Once upon a time, there was--Lisa is a cat. Devon is a dog, and Shade is a fox."

Jeane: What made you think to write about Lisa's Hill?

Precious: Well, it was Mole's Hill, so I started writing stuff with people in it.

Jeane: Did anybody else do that?

Precious: No, I just did that for myself.

Jeane: You don't remember anybody in your class sharing anything like that?

Precious: Yeah.

Jeane: Do you remember who?

Precious: Pat and Mary. (40/p.6)

Precious recalled the books from which many of her ideas grew. Although she did far more story-related writing (of the type demonstrated by the exclusive White girls' group) than her other African American classmates, she also wrote other literature and family related stories in her journal. She wrote about her family several times, generally pieces about how she loved her family and how they loved her. She was especially prone to writing about literature she liked, including several of Lois Ehlert's other books (e.g., *Nuts to You*, *Eating the Alphabet*, and *Planting a Rainbow*). She even wrote a piece about how well she liked Lois Ehlert's books. She often drew illustrations resembling those of *Planting a Rainbow* (Ehlert, 1988) and told me that she read "lots of Lois Ehlert's books." She also wrote an entry about Martin Luther King, Jr. shortly after the holiday commemorating him--the same day that Mrs. Tyler read the class a biography about his life.

Martin Luther King Jr. is DaDa anb precher The 2 play football He reb BooKs
 He HedP seKE PLPL TEL PePLe not to fit They rib on a bus it was his
 birthday. It is a Frastry. [Martin Luther Kind is dead and a preacher. The two
 play football. He read books. He helped sick people. Tell people not to fight.
 They ride on a bus. It was his birthday. It is a (??).]

In her interview, Precious recalled a connection between this piece of writing and when a visiting African American boy read something about Martin Luther King, Jr. to the class the morning that the teacher shared her book. Despite her replications of peers' strategies and topics, she also pursued her own reading/writing connections during writing workshop.

Precious' literature-related writing reflects both her responses to the read-alouds and group-shared writing being shared in class and her desire to move into the White girls' exclusive peer group. Her culturally influenced behaviors largely prevented her from being accepted into the White peer group, despite the interest classmates showed in her literature-related writing, despite her inclusion of the White girls as characters in her stories, and despite her increasingly sophisticated use of the girls' techniques (e.g., literature-related writing, chapters, dialogue) in her writing.

Response in Read-Alouds and Group Shared Writing Times

I observed Precious engage in a number of response behaviors during the read-alouds and group-shared writing time. She responded to read-alouds both orally and in her movements. I divided Precious' responses into the following categories:

- Initiating readings
- Oral responses
- Reading-related movements
- Sharing books

In addition to the categories above (which will be explored in this part of the chapter), I also noted Precious' movements and behaviors which did *not* seem related to the

stories being read but instead seemed linked to read-aloud and group-shared writing as social events.

Precious often appeared distracted during read-aloud and group-shared writing times. She moved about frequently, engaged in other activities, talked, and generally acted as if she were paying attention to the world outside of the stories being read. I wondered, however, how her other behaviors might be linked to read-alouds and group-shared writing when I observed her correctly answer a teacher's question after an entire read-aloud period of distractions and other activities. In fact, she had been listening intently to both the story and to the teacher's question (04/p.4). For that reason, I will explore both the clearly-related and the seemingly-unrelated behaviors of Precious.

Initiating Readings

One of the activities Precious engaged in during read-aloud and group-shared writing times was initiating readings. While the teacher or another student read aloud, Precious often meandered to the sections of the carpet where the children's journals were stacked or where the books crates were accessible. She would then browse the books and journals. I noted equal numbers of her reading both students' journals (taken from children or borrowed from the stack) and her reading of other books. The consequences of her reading these other books varied; one time she was sent back to the classroom from the centrium for reading a copy of *One Hundred One Dalmatians* (30/p.9). On another occasion, while Mark shared his story, Precious thumbed through a copy of *Hands* (Ehlert, 1997). Mrs. Smith added Precious' name to the chart paper "list" of inattentive children (30/p.6). Her pattern of reading was demonstrated from early protocols to some of the last (e.g., 04/p.4; 16/p.9; 27/p.6; 38/p.5), and she seemed to be a surface-level reader, flipping pages quickly and

handling several books in one sitting. On one occasion, while the teacher read *The Tiny, Tiny Boy and the Big, Big Cow: A Scottish Folktale* (VanLaan, 1993), Precious often appeared distracted.

Mrs. S: Travis, what should the boy do to make the cow stand still?

Travis: The mother should tell the cow.

(Precious comes over to the table--mad that she can't touch [my] computer, picks up the birthday book and takes it to the floor, flipping through it.)

[Later]

(Precious is up at the table on her knees, and she returns the book to the table. She is now flipping through the journals. Now she's picking up a pencil and writing in it.)

(22/p.21)

She also read other things while the class engaged in group-shared writing time.

(Tyler is sharing.)

When Precious comes back into the classroom, she seats herself right next to me--by a basket of books. She takes them out, one at a time, and she flips through them. Looks like she's reading them. (23/p.3).

She even engaged in other reading behaviors while the teacher read *Kinda Blue* (Grifalconi, 1993), one of her favorite books. When she read other students' journals, the teacher or intern generally asked her to hand over the journal or simply reached out for it with the understanding that Precious would know to hand it over (08/p.2; 17/p.6; 29/p.14; 35/p.6).

I did not observe Precious trying to get any other students to look at the books and journals she read during carpet time. In fact, she generally did so quietly and sometimes without being noticed, but other children would sometimes point her out and call attention to the activity--indirectly causing a disruption because of violating norms. In each of the protocols where she read other materials, she remained an active participant in the conversations about the books and stories.

Oral Responses

Precious often responded orally to read-alouds and group-shared writing in her class. I found that her oral responses served different purposes. Occasionally, she answered recall-based, efferent questions of the teacher. On the other hand, she also responded by spontaneously predicting what might happen next in the stories, connecting the story to her own life, adopting the "voice" of a character, clarifying or questioning, and making suggestions to classmates as they planned sequels or new chapters for their stories. I also found that the ways in which Precious delivered these responses had much to do with how they were received by her classmates and teacher. I will discuss both the content and the method of delivery.

The teacher knew that Precious was a good reader and astute. She frequently called on Precious to answer questions about stories, and Precious was usually eager to talk about books they were reading together. In group, however, Precious would often "call out" any number of her oral responses without following the guidelines for participation (see last chapter). During my months in the Friendship Program, I watched Precious work to learn how to "do" response appropriately in the read-alouds and group-shared writing time. Even in February, Precious still sometimes called out answers before raising her hand, but the fact that she did raise her hand demonstrated a growing awareness of how to work within the participant structure of the group. As Mrs. Smith read the story of "Catskinella," for instance, Precious immediately drew a connection to Cinderella. She raised her hand and simultaneously interrupted Mrs. Smith's reading to say, "This is like Cinderella!" (43/p.5). Despite her journal and book browsing, Precious correctly answered questions related to stories that had been read to her while she seemed to be distracted.

Mrs. Smith: Can you think of any stories we've read that have something in them that happened over and over again? I'm thinking about a

farm story we read about a cow. Anybody remember what happened with that cow, Precious?

Precious: (Pause)

Billy: (calling out) It wouldn't stay still.

Precious: It wouldn't stay still. [She recalls the story right away.]

Mrs. Smith: Precious is trying hard to tell me, and I'm glad to hear that the other people remember but it's hard if we all talk at one time because nobody can hear.

Precious: I wouldn't stay still and --

Mrs. Smith: (interrupting) Each time he would go back to his mother.

(31/p.5)

Precious connected with her classmates by sharing her responses. The read-alouds and group-shared writing times were very much shared experiences. Although she was capable of answering recall based questions addressed to her by the teacher (e.g., answering Mrs. Smith's Buffalo Gals question based on the Little House books [35; pp.13-14]), she was far more likely to blurt out an emerging vision of where the story was going (10/p.4; 43/p.4), protest that she couldn't see the illustrations (14/p.8; 15/p.10; 42/p.9), or remark on something she felt her classmates had the prior knowledge to understand with her, such as how the current story was similar to or different from something else they had read (09/16; 25/p.3). In a small group read-aloud session with me, Precious directed some of her comments at classmates. When I read *Kinda Blue* (Grifalconi, 1993) to the group, and read the part of the story in which the protagonist mentions that she is almost seven years old, Precious remarked to Tiffany, "She's seven?!" with surprise (28/p.1). She also shared observations of illustrations (e.g., "He's got a pillow" [32/p.1]).

I found that Precious was more likely to connect the readings with her personal life when she was in the small group setting than when she was in the large group in the classroom. She exhibited this higher level of response when she mentioned "sometimes my brother does that" (32/p.4) after seeing a child sleeping in a chair in *First Pink Light* (Greenfield, 1991) and when she explained to her peers what a "papa"

was--clarifying Grifalconi's use of the term--"A papa's a grandpa" (28/p.1). I am unsure if her connections with her own life were more due to the context of the small group setting (i.e., being more comfortable in a small group), because of an increased number of speaking opportunities since I paused at the end of each page, or my efforts to avoid suggesting an efferent stance. These small groups were also exclusively African American, so she might have felt more free to connect with her own life and to connect with her peers. She also responded in ways that demonstrated her social understandings.

(Precious has drawn a picture in response to the story [Grifalconi, 1993].)

Jeane: Precious, tell me about your picture.

Precious: This? This is the girl.

Jeane: From the story? What's she doing in your picture?

Precious: Digging holes. (She offers no further response.)

(I speak to Tiffany briefly about her picture)

[Later]

Tiffany: It says, "when she goes into the corn."

Jeane: Is this when she goes into the corn?

Tiffany: Yes, see, she goes to the corn. She right here. (Precious is saying something, and Tiffany is pointing to the book now.)

Precious: And here it be all different colors. Like you.

Jeane: Precious, what did you mean when you said that I'm different?

Precious: You're different.

Jeane: I'm different how?

Precious: Colors. (she points to our arms.) I love corn.

Jeane: Precious, I have another question for you. Are you and Tiffany different colors? (Precious's skin is darker than Tiffany's, and I'm curious about how they will respond.)

Precious: Nope. (28/pp.4-5)

After that part of the interview, we compared the colors of the girls' hands, and Tiffany agreed that they were indeed different. At the end of the interview, Precious asked, "Can we read some more books?" Her desire to continue with read-alouds reminded me of Latresa's request to borrow the Coles (1995) book after I read with her during

her explore period. I am not sure that the read-aloud and the individual attention given to the children were separable in the eyes of the girls.

She also stepped into the shoes of the characters several times as we read, answering back for characters (e.g., "real corn don't talk to you" [p.28/p.3]), repeating the dialogue of characters in the stories ("No, Tyree, you have to go to bed" [32/p.2]; "and I didn't care who knew" [28/p.1]), and speculating on a character's feelings (e.g., "I think he loves his daddy" [32/p.3]; and "she loves him" [32/p.3]).

When she wanted to make general observations about the stories, I also saw her use a strategy for obtaining or holding a conversational turn. On two occasions, Precious held her turn by first saying, "I have a question," and following with a statement.

(We are having a small group reading of *First Pink Light*. As I am reading aloud, Precious interrupts. An illustration shows a little boy playing with a box.)

Precious: I got a question.

Jeane: What's your question?

Precious: My question is that he has a box and he stay in the box for a while. (32/p.1)

[Later, in the same reading session, an illustration shows the boy with a sad face.]

Tiffany: He be sad.

Jeane: Why would he be sad, Tiffany?

Tiffany: Cause when he wake up, um, the curtains blow.

Jeane: And the what?

Tiffany: The curtains blowing all over.

Precious: I got a question.

Jeane: What, Precious?

Precious: He's gonna be asleep, I think. (32/p.4)

She was a keen observer of literature and would note her observations immediately, almost as they occurred to her. For instance, as the teacher began reading *The Faithful Friend* (SanSouci, 1995), Precious jumped up and remarked, "Two boys--it's a White boy and a Black boy!" (44/p.3). Just as she made her observations known

rapidly, she was also quick to ask questions or get clarifications. She frequently pointed and asked questions regarding illustrations, text, or storylines. She asked me to confirm that the odd-colored illustration was to represent corn (28/p.1), and called out questions many other times (e.g., "What do that thing do?" and "What's this?") regarding illustrations.

Precious seemed especially attentive when the teacher or I read-aloud literature with African American characters. In these conversations, she spoke with confidence, moved closer to the books, answered questions, made personal connections between the literature and her own life, and stepped into the stories. I wanted to analyze her responses for the level of her response. However, such analysis usually occurs when the responses have been spontaneously shared rather than when they have been elicited by teacher questioning, as was often the case in this study. If one considers responses according to a model including personal connections, living through a text, making intertextual connections, and analysis of literary elements (Sipe, 1998), most of Precious' spontaneous (observable, mediated) responses would fall into the first three categories. Her discussion of literary elements (such as illustrations, genre, and predictions), however, were generally preceded by prompting by the teacher or me.

(Following reading of Greenfield, 1991)

Jeane: What did you think about this book, Precious?

Precious: This book? I liked it. I liked the mad page. (She begins flipping through the book.)

Jeane: Precious is looking for the page she really likes.

Precious: This page. (32/p.6)

In class one day, Sam shared a story about a pig family visiting a park and using the playground equipment. He personified the pigs. After he shared his in-progress writing, Mrs. Smith asked, "Is this story going to be fiction or non-fiction?" Someone responds, but I cannot hear it.

Mrs. Smith: Do you agree with that, Mary?

(Mary hesitates. She's been writing in her journal. Plus I couldn't hear the response, so she might not have heard it.)

(Nonparticipant calls out that it is non-fiction.)

Precious: Fiction.

Mrs. Smith: Why do you say it's fiction, Precious?

Precious: Because it's not true. (35/pp.4-5)

Although Precious was capable of analyzing literary elements, it happened infrequently for all the children in the class, particularly because story discussions were often cut short; one-fifth of all read-alouds (and subsequent discussions) ended prematurely because of scheduling. The efferent questioning, although occasionally related to literary elements, also prevented analytic pondering because most questions were simply recall-based. Precious' participation is infrequently evident in the protocols in which Mrs. Smith limited efferent questioning because Precious was removed from the room by a volunteer on the day the teacher read *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* (Miller, 1994) and was suffering from a stomach virus on the day the teacher read *The Story of Ruby Bridges* (Coles, 1995). In Chapter Eight, I will describe the kinds of analysis that other children demonstrated during those two read-alouds.

I also cannot determine where Precious' questioning of the story falls into the categories noted above. Her questioning seems to be a category of its own, since I feel a question related to the text—even basic questions about a peer's purpose ("Why you leave us on the hook?" [09/p.16]) or for clarification ("This is corn?" [28/p.1]) suggest substantial engagement with a story but in ways not consistently reflected in traditional categories of response. Because questions are generally unprompted by the teacher (i.e., they aren't part of a response to a *teacher's* question), they indicate the possibility of an independent desire to learn more. I wonder if she would have demonstrated more analysis and evidence of aesthetic responses if her voice had been more

frequently validated in the classroom read-alouds of literature and groups-shared writing.

Movement

Since illustrations were important to her, Precious often moved to get a better view or explicitly stated "I can't see" to encourage the reader to show more of the illustrations. Scooting (09/p.8; 12/p.11; 16/p.3) was not her only reading-related movement, however. Precious also responded to read-alouds and peers' group-shared writing (and the conversations surrounding their readings) by dancing when children answered effereent questions correctly (08/p.5), moving her face close to a book for examination (14/p.4), pointing (07/p.5), and even reaching up and touching a book (07/p.5). Once in a while, she walked right up to a reader (e.g., 17/p.5). Most of these behaviors ran counter to classroom norms, so she would be redirected, sometimes told to sit down or provided the rule for behavior. She also learned to raise her hand to gain the "floor" but didn't follow the rule every time she spoke. These responsive behaviors were, however, very consistent with her behaviors during other times of the school day and demonstrated evidence of engagement with the story. Although reseachers of young children indicate movement as a mode of response to story, movement responses were not validated in the classroom.

Sharing Books

Precious enjoyed reading and sometime shared the books she was reading during the class "share" time--the equivalent of a show-and-tell period. What I found interesting about her sharing behavior was not only that she chose books and her own journal writing rather than toys for her sharing time but that she demanded the same conditions as a real read aloud--waiting at the front of the classroom like the teachers sometimes did. For instance, when sharing Crews' (1978) *Freight Train*, she stood

before the group holding the book. After Sam mentioned that he also had a copy of that book, Precious stood before the group, waiting. Before calling on the next audience member, she stated, "Raise your hand!" and then called on Pat by name--just as the teachers always did, with the inflection of a question (03/p.6). She also demanded this kind of attention when she shared her own writing.

(During one share session, Precious stands in front of the group and flips through the pages, trying to find the right one to share. Then she stands there.)

Precious: I'm waiting for (NP), Pat. . . .

Then she reads: I am wanting to play today with Mom and Dad.

Intern: You said someone else--

Precious: My brother.

(There is an interruption of some kind.)

Precious: I'm starting over. (Begins reading her piece) I'm going to play today with my mom and my dad, my brother, hide and go seek.

(A bunch of hands go up to ask questions--all are White. She stands and waits to call on someone.) (09/p.16)

In another observation, she exhibited the same waiting behaviors.

Intern: All right, we can do one more person today. All right, Precious. I know you're so excited about this story.

(Precious sits on the chair and waits.)

Intern: Tyler, you need to sit back. All right, Precious, you need to go. You need to read. I need to look at them, and you need to worry about your story.

Precious: They're playing. (She points at Kaley and Mary. Latresa is looking at Tiffany's journal.)

Intern: (to class) Don't forget who's watching--when you look around. Someone's writing down [names]. (To Precious) Read it.

Precious: I like (she covers her face).

(Intern helps her read.)

Precious: I wanna read it!

Intern: Well, okay, you read it.

Precious: I like Lois Ehlert's books. I like Nuts to You period. It's about squirrels.

Intern: Show them your squirrels. Who else is in this picture?

Precious: Lois Ehlert and the sun.

Intern: Yea, Lois Ehlert. Billy, Latresa, pass the journal up, please.

(Precious still sits there, waiting for them to hand forward the journals.)

Intern: What other Lois Ehlert books could she add?
 Child: Feathers for Lunch.
 (11/p.5)

As Precious exhibited these waiting behaviors, I believe she might have been demonstrating (1) a developing awareness of the discourse of read-alouds and / or (2) a desire to try out the status of "teacher." The group-shared writing time granted her the opportunity to engage in the kinds of speaker control her teachers usually possessed. Her use of the waiting strategies suggests the degree to which she was being socialized into the communication norms of the classroom.

Reading Time Behaviors Not Observably Related to Literature or Classmates' Writing

Precious engaged in a number of other behaviors during reading time.

Although these behaviors were not clearly linked to her responses to read-alouds, they did occur during reading time and appeared to be relevant to how she was received by her peers. They also demonstrate that some of her responses, particularly movement and calling out, were linked to a pattern of behaviors in which she engaged (i.e., they were consistent with her behavior during other times of day and were thus part of her repertoire of "normal" behaviors) and that she was capable of attending to the content of stories even when she was not visibly devoting all of her attention to the read-aloud.

Just as Precious engaged in playful behaviors during other times of the day, she also engaged in play during read-alouds and group-shared writing times. At times, she came to me to try to type on or look at my computer (15/p.18), and at other times, she was aggressive or playful (depending upon the cultural perspective of the companion) with classmates (32/p.1; 34/p.15). Some children, especially Latresa and Travis, recognized her behaviors as "play" and played back; others, such as Pat and Mary, were quick to report the behavior to the teacher or to move away from her.

Two examples of her playful behavior during group-shared writing time demonstrate a typical pattern.

(Pat is reading her story to the class)

Precious lunges with hands like claws at Kaley. Kaley scoots back. So Precious scoots forward, toward Pat (who's reading). She's right at Pat's feet. (16/p.4)

Precious scoots close behind Pat. Pat turns and takes a mad look at Precious and puts her hand up. (34/p.9)

I was particularly surprised at Pat's negative responses to Precious during read-aloud times, because Precious frequently braided or otherwise stroked Pat's long hair during read-alouds (e.g., 04/p.3; 11/p.9; 16/p.12; 26/p.15; 35/p.3).

(Karen is sharing her story.)

Billy has his head down on the carpet. Leon has a paper balanced on his head. Lauren is checking the bottom of her shoes. Precious is braiding Pat's hair. (14/p.8)

Although Pat apparently consented--by not responding in the negative--for Precious to braid her hair in many of the read-aloud sessions, Pat physically moved away from Precious on occasions when Precious was not "doing" her hair. I found it strange that the girls never talked to each other about this activity; I never observed Pat or Precious negotiate in advance for Precious to do the braiding. She just began doing it while the reading happened. Many of the African American girls "did" the hair of the White girls during read alouds. In fact, it occurred so often that the teacher and intern did a role-play session on what kinds of behaviors children should/should not engage in during reading time. They included in this example a "beauty shop" as a negative example of what children should be doing.

(Mrs. Tyler and Mrs. Smith tell the children that Mrs. Smith will talk to the children about something important. Children are on the floor Indian Style. Mrs. Smith sits down in front of the group.)

Mrs. Smith: Mrs. Tyler and I talked together yesterday about our day yesterday. (Summary of following words--'We're not so sure that we all had a

good day.' Something about yesterday was important enough to bring to a meeting here, apparently.)

Mrs. Smith: Today, I'm going to notice which children are staying in one place. Mrs. Tyler, you want to pretend? (Mrs. Tyler goes to sit on the floor with a journal.)

Mrs. Smith: Mrs. Tyler? Can you show some of these children what they're doing when they're moving and moving? I'm going to pretend that I'm reading *Mole's Hill*.

(As the teacher reads, Mrs. Tyler moves around on the floor. Teacher and intern are in-role.)

Mrs. Smith: Would you please sit in one spot and stay there? Look, you just trampled on Billy's finger. What should you say?

Mrs. Tyler: I'm sorry. (continuing the pretend)
(to the children) Does it bother you when I'm doing this while you're trying to hear the story?

Billy and David: No.

(Mrs. Smith picks up on this cue to follow up--I don't catch all she says.)

Mrs. Smith: I'm going to watch to see who stays in the same spot the whole time--and who can keep their hands to themselves.
Mrs. Tyler, will you do a beauty shop demonstration?

(The Intern models it on Pat and Mary. She sits behind them, playing with their hair while the teacher reads aloud. The students laugh.)

Mrs. Smith: How well do you think she can concentrate? . . . If you have something that's going to keep you from listening, put it away. If you can't see or hear, fix it right now. Your body tells us a lot of things. (09/p.5)

In this example, Mrs. Smith was also identifying other ways that children were violating read-aloud norms--including play and physical movement. Precious engaged in at least one of these activities (i.e., play or movement) in every read-aloud observation. However, she remained a listener, as evidenced by her insightful responses during the read-aloud question and comment time. This demonstration had no observable effect on her reading time behaviors. My transcripts show many instances of Precious braiding Pat's hair during read-alouds *after* the date of the demonstration. Instead, the read-aloud as a social event was important to her as a time to be herself, acting as she normally did, while remaining a part of the reading community.

Summary

Precious represents many of our students in elementary classrooms. She was complex, enthusiastic, curious, disruptive, smart, and loving. Like most of us, she sought a place of belonging--a peer group that "fit" her, and she experienced considerable trouble finding a comfortable fit. Her literacy enthusiasm was often expressed in ways that were inconsistent with teachers' and peers' expectations of her. This mismatch kept her out of particular peer groups and created obstacles she struggled, at such a young age, to learn to overcome. I also suspect that her task of identity construction was further complicated as she sat in "Listening Club" while classmates played or as she found herself rejected from the very groups she aspired to join.

As Hilliard (1992) has noted, the "traditional school style has severe limitations" (p.373). Precious was able to direct her attention to multiple tasks simultaneously and often *needed* the stimulation of several activities at a time (thus, the reading of journals during group-shared writing time or the movement during read-aloud). In school, this ability was devalued--or even penalized. When she played with neighborhood kids, however, this part of her cultural background was reinforced. Her mother, aware of the values and behaviors school valued, worked to infuse her with new values and standards of behavior, but the norms of the neighborhood culture were what she had learned for the first five years of her life. In the classroom, she struggled to *not* do what came naturally--speaking out, moving, playing, and demonstrating what she knew. The consequences of acting naturally, however, often marginalized her. As a first grader struggling between two cultures, that of home (neighborhood) and school, she would sometimes fail to meet her teachers' expectations. Hilliard (1992) suggests such mismatches result from school being more conformist than

creative, more standardized than variation accepting, more controlled than expressive (p.374).

The discrepancy between Precious' high academic achievement and her poorly-regarded read-aloud behaviors makes me wonder what we can do to make read-aloud time more supportive for students who are trying to learn two cultures. Clearly, her behaviors during read-aloud time were not the result of a dislike for read-alouds of literature and group-shared writing, nor were they a result of disengagement. Even when she moved about, called out, or read other materials, she was attending to the readings and demonstrating engagement with the stories, sometimes making personal connections with the characters and issues in stories. What Precious' response behaviors--movement, calling out, reading other books--did represent, however, were her standard ways of behaving during all times of day.

CHAPTER 7

LEON'S RESPONSES TO READ-ALOUDS AND GROUP-SHARED WRITING

Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss Leon's oral and written responses to read-alouds and group-shared writing. I will also examine his social place in the classroom and his ethnic identity, for his rank in the social hierarchy of the classroom appeared to be influenced by his ethnic identity. Finally, I will compare the responses of Leon to his classmate Precious (described in Chapter Six) to explore tentative explanations for their differences and similarities.

Background

Leon, a kindergartner at the time of this study, was quickly a favorite child of anyone who met him. The second-from-the-oldest child in a family of three boys and one girl, he smiled easily and played "politely," and he fit in well with any group of children at school. His family lived in Pine Acres, the low income housing development adjacent to the school. Both parents held full time jobs but staggered their schedules so that one of them would be home whenever the children were home. His mother explained their rationale.

I got a job [when the third son started school] and did it so that I could be home in the afternoon. It's already a long day for them [at school], and then to do daycare. (Shaking her head "no.") It's important to be here at the end of the day. I generally work until one o'clock so that I can be home by three o'clock. (5/22/98)

Leon's mother was home temporarily with a new baby and had arranged her post-maternity work schedule so that she would work in the middle of the night while her children slept. At all times, a parent would be home with the children.

I noticed right away that the mother spoke glowingly of her son, and pictures of Leon and his brothers hung on the walls. She explained that the family did everything together ("They do everything with me,") and seemed hesitant to expose Leon to families and friends whose values differed from theirs. Aware of the stereotypes about African American males, she explained that her primary goal for her children was for them to "grow up as good, respectable citizens—to make a positive contribution to society, especially with the status of Black males. I think that's why my husband, he works so hard to *show* them [an alternative example]." She explained that it was also not just how outside society perceived Black males that concerned her but also the situations of her own family members. When I had asked about how close Leon was to his paternal aunts and cousins, she replied that they were very different. Leon would sometimes ask, she said, about why his cousins did not live with their fathers. She perceived fatherless families as "pretty bad" and did not want her children exposed to them. The consequences on the children in such families, she explained, were tough, and the behaviors of the cousins who lived in those circumstances suffered as a consequence of decreased supervision and an absence of strong male role models. That was also why she noted that "he [Leon] doesn't play with the kids from here . . . because this area's not that good."

Leon's primary playmates away from school, then, were not the neighborhood kids but rather the children in his own family. His mother took the children to the park, the local public library, to ball games, and bike riding. She also enrolled the children in local sports groups, and told me that Leon was in Tee Ball for the first time that year. "We have a lot of books in the house," too, she explained. Indeed, I did

notice many children's books in the apartment and a video case filled with Disney movies. Leon not only had books owned by his family and library books he checked out, he also had a bedtime ritual of reading with his two brothers. "We have Bible story books that his brother reads to him. . . . We read to them at bedtime, or sometimes his older brother will read. They like going into his room and climbing in his bed when he reads," she noted, and also shared that Leon could read the Bible Story book alone, also, when he had the support of his Bible Story tapes.

Like Precious, Leon was exposed to literate behaviors in his home. The value of reading was conveyed to him, materials were available, and he participated in *group* reading activities with his parents and siblings. In fact, this literate culture was one of the only ones to which he was exposed as a result of his mother's insulating efforts.

Curious about Leon's mother's own ethnic background, I asked her about her life before the university town. An only child, she grew up in a northern state. She left her family behind in order to move to the South, where her husband had grown up and where the rest of his large family was located. "We moved here for him," she explained. As she spoke, as was the case with Precious's mother, I heard no trace of Black English Vernacular, and, like Precious' mother, she also had completed two years of community college while trying to raise (at that time) three children.

Leon's mother was not surprised when I mentioned to her that he seemed so familiar with the culture of school. She speculated on why that might be the case.

I'm a stickler for the rules--they are not to be broken. Follow the rules, regularly. And I also try to teach them that everyone deserves respect when you talk to them. I show them that--not like they're adults--but that if you're respectful, you'll get the same in return. (5/22/98)

Thus, although Leon had spent less time in the school setting than Precious,¹ he had an easier time assimilating to the norms of school; school norms were remarkably similar to the norms at home, so activities such as hand raising were more easily integrated into an existing schema for discourse (i.e., we take turns talking) than was the case for Precious.

Indeed, during the school day, I observed Leon begin to publicly identify with the children who followed school rules, rather than those who broke them. He copied some of the Pine Elementary school rules into his journal as did Pat, his classmate. He also created a page in his journal with check marks all over it. He explained his journal character to me, "You know what, this guy does real good. See. Because he gots a lot of checks because he's been *real* good." As I compared Leon's experiences to those of Precious, I noted that Leon demonstrated a more rigid sense of school rules and class norms than Precious did. For instance, while Precious was one to initiate behaviors not sanctioned by the school, Leon was one to dismiss such behavior and simply (1) discourage it or (2) tell the teacher. I never observed him respond either angrily (like his White peers) or playfully (like his African American peers) to any assertive behaviors. One example of the differences between the two children occurred on a morning when the teacher had grouped children for a cooperative but structured response activity.

When I walk over to the table [where Precious and Leon have been asked to sit], I see Precious reach over and hit Leon in the ear. She immediately says, smiling, "I'm sorry," and he runs over to tell the teacher. The teacher returns with Leon and tells Precious that she [i.e., the teacher] doesn't think Leon "liked that." (27/p.11)

¹ Leon, as a kindergartner, was one year younger than Precious. Both children had been exposed to Head Start, a preschool program available for financially needy children in their district.

On other occasions, Leon would become like a big brother, watching out for a peer until the peer's behavior became so distracting that he finally "told on" his classmate. This pattern was frequent in Leon's interactions with David. One morning, David engaged in the forbidden activity of movement during read-aloud..

David turns to touch Shade, and Leon tells him "stop" and points to the chart paper ["the list"] where David's name is already written. Then Leon raises his hand. (Time passes, and he is not called upon to respond.) David is now up on his feet, pulling his arms inside the armholes of his shirt and flopping them in front of Leon's face. Leon raises his hand--then puts it down again. He puts his hand on David's head and points to Mrs. Smith as if to say that's where he should be looking. (30/pp.6-7)

Although he did what he could to ignore (09/p.15) or stop (29/p.4) behaviors that were counter to school and classroom norms, he was fairly explicit about his friend's behaviors. During one read-aloud session with me and Leon, David had walked away from the group before we had completed the reading. David had wandered to other bookcases, to a Geo Safari game, and to other parts of the library--much to my dismay. Leon appealed for him to come back, saying such things as "What's wrong with you, David? What's with you?" (29/p.5). Later, in another small-group read, Leon explained to Precious, Tiffany, and Travis about David's earlier behavior.

Leon: Last time, David was being bad because he wanted to play that game over there.

Jeane: Tiffany, can you write out what's in the picture?

Leon: When David came, he was walking all over the place, and he wanted that game over there.

Travis: What's that game?

Leon: It's like one of those --(pause)--that with America, so he was trying to find America. (32/pp.5-6)

He also, almost intuitively, knew when to seek recognition for his friend's behavior when it supported school values. He "shared" with the class about David's willingness to share his snack with him during recess (16/p.21).

Leon's personality made him a favorite among the children in the class. While he and Sam were almost constantly together, he also fit well with both the White children and the other African American children. My analysis of his play patterns indicated that he was the child most likely to initiate an interracial play experience. Of the 71 interracial student-initiated exchanges (described in Chapter Five), Leon initiated 17 interracial exchanges (or 23% of all class interracial initiations). He also sat near White children more often than any of his African American peers sat by White children. His teachers perceived him as a student with leadership potential, making him the only African American (during my time in the classroom) asked to head small cooperative groups. He enthusiastically participated in almost any activity.

Leon identified himself as a lover of "reading group" during this study. He was academically ahead of his other African American peers, so while Latresa, Tiffany, and Billy attended Reading Mastery and "skills" time, Leon's instructor called their group "Reading Group." During one of our read-aloud sessions, he feared that he had missed his reading group. As we were finishing the last of our work, I stood to return to the classroom.

Leon: Don't tell me it's reading group.

Jeane: What's reading group like?

Leon: We have to spell sounds. Do not tell me it's reading group. I'm not want [*sic*] to skip it. David, it's time to go. (29/p.5)

Leon also shared his desire to read "reading books" during lunch once.

Leon was conscious of his physical skin color, although the subject rarely came up in conversation. During one of the structured response activities, Mrs. Smith asked the children to draw and color representations of their own faces as part of a response activity to *In the Tall, Tall Grass* (Fleming, 1991). I sat at the table with Leon and several other students, and I worked, at their request, on a portrait of my own face. As the children reached for crayons, they asked one another about their eye colors.

After the eye color conversation, Leon remarks, "I'm brown!" But when I ask him about me, he tells me everything *except* that I am White.

Jeane: What color am I, Leon, because I can't decide?

Leon: Your eyes are brownish.

(Others interrupt with their own questions, and I go ahead and color my portrait.)

I tell him that I used Peach to color my skin but that it doesn't match my skin.

Leon: But it looks just like you! (27/p.12)

Although he represented a close academic match for Precious, Leon's classroom behaviors differed from hers in notable ways. His social success may be the result of his disposition to follow school rules easily, so the norms of classroom discourse (and read-aloud/group-shared writing time, especially) became familiar to him quickly and with little prodding by his teacher. He also had many friends and was the most interracial sociable child in the class. Like Precious, he valued literacy and had received family support in reading. It is possible that his familiarity with school read-aloud norms and participant structures was the result of numerous reading opportunities at home, with groups of children, and in a family environment similar to school.

Written Response

Leon's literature-related writing did not follow a class pattern in the way Precious' did. He seemed to be a free spirit, writing what he wanted and when he wanted it. He did connect some of his writing with read-alouds and classmates' group-shared writing but did not do so in the ways of the White girls' group. Approximately half of the writing samples I collected from Leon were literature-related, and most of that writing occurred early in the school year, as he was learning how to write words conventionally. Thus, he used the books as models for the words he wanted to copy into his journal. This activity may suggest a desire to please the teacher academically in the same manner he did socially. The main topics for Leon's writing included his

mother, make-believe stories, and things he loved--especially dinosaurs. I will explore the parts of his writing that appeared to be (or were acknowledged by him to be) related to literature or peers' writing.

Leon used the Lois Ehlert books *Feathers for Lunch*, *Eating the Alphabet*, and *Fish Eyes* for many of his early journal entries. He told me that he "copied it [i.e., the words] off of Fish Eyes and Feathers for Lunch" (45/p.1). The Ehlert-related words (e.g., "feather," "lunch," "fish eyes," "alphabet," "avocado," "apple," and "currant") appeared in the early journal entries and resurfaced, sometimes months later. During our interview, he warned me, "It was because I was putting *Eating the Alphabet*--all those words. You're gonna see some more words from *Eating the Alphabet*" (45/p.4). He also used the environmental print in his writing. For instance, in one journal entry, he said the characters were "getting ready to fight" and "knew why to stop and think." "Stop and Think" were signs posted around the hallways of the school; he copied them into his journal.

As he wrote more and more journal entries, he began putting "CHADR" at the top of the pages with a number. These connected pages of story represented chapters, something many of his classmates were using in their writing. As we reviewed his journals, he saw one of his chapter stories and remarked, "I did a chapter! I liked *Paddle to the Sea*, and *Paddle to the Sea* had chapters!" He first used the chapters in a "Trouble" story based on a television and book series on the character Arthur. He continued to use them as he wrote a story that was "something like *Paddle to the Sea*" and had the main character "in a boat."

The last literature-related writing sample I saw in his collection had "The Gingerbread Boy" as the main character. His illustrations showed a dark, gingerbread-shaped character talking to animals and getting into mischief.

[Journal excerpts--with translations]

is tharr an uv wau (Is there another way across the river?)

(next page) He Was scating (He was skating.)

(next page) Was He A Fad No (Was he afraid? No.)

(next page) [undecipherable--He later reads it to me as "He was running faster than the rain."]

(next page) The JinJBreiman hab poer (The Gingerbread Man had power.)

(next page) The jinjBrED man hab traBoll (The Gingerbread Man had trouble.)

When I interviewed Leon about the story, he told me, "He's going to across the river, but he gots trouble 'cause he might have fall in. And know what he found? Buttons and a tie. He's going faster than the rain 'cause he don't want to get soggy. Now he can't eat him 'cause he gots a horseshoe" (45/p.8).

Leon told me that his mother had read the story to him, and I also was aware that Mrs. Smith had done a number of response activities to a version of *The Gingerbread Man*. He explained, "I thought of it, and it's a book my mommy read to me."

Jeane: Does your mom read to you a lot?

Leon: Whole stories. *The Stinky Cheese Man* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

Overall, Leon's writing did not show literature-related patterns that connected him to or distanced him from his classmates. The social hierarchy of the class, however, appeared in one of his stories about a magic rabbit and dinosaur. The rabbit did magical and exciting things to Lisa and Devon, but in his story a dinosaur ate Shade. Leon recalled the story as he had written it, "Shade gonna get there forever and she's gonna die in his stomach. See, she's in the stomach, and she died. She made herself die because he burned and burned the dinosaur's mouth and got the smoke out, and she got burned" (45/p.6). When I asked him why the characters' experiences were so different, he avoided my question and moved on to the next writing sample.

Leon also included stories that were connected to the themes in the class (e.g., farming, scarecrows, etc.) but that were not explicitly tied to the literature from class

or to any of his classmates' stories. He loved reading his portfolio and called out several times for us not to "skip pages" and remarked that he "[couldn't] wait!" to read. He also told a classmate, "You know what? You know what this is--what we're doing? This is my old writing in my old journal!" I had wondered if Leon, at his young age, would even recall much of the writing from his journal. To my surprise, Leon usually recalled the specifics of his stories very accurately, based on my comparison between teacher writing on the pages, his verbal descriptions of what the stories and words depicted, and his oral readings of the stories during group-shared writing time.

Response in Read-Aloud and Group-Shared Writing Times

Leon engaged in my small group read-aloud time with great enthusiasm. He liked to hear stories and always went enthusiastically with me when I offered to read a book to him. I discovered that his visible responses to the read-alouds differed in some notable ways from the responses of Precious, even though his academic achievement paralleled Precious'. Leon's categories of response, unlike Precious', included mostly oral responses during read-alouds and group-shared writing time. Therefore, I will discuss oral response (with several types of response identified) and then introduce a category on other, seemingly unrelated behaviors to demonstrate a pattern between his response behaviors and normal patterns of behavior.

Oral Response

Leon responded verbally to stories that teachers, students, and I read to him. I divided his response types into the following groupings:

- Observations on text
- Responding to efferent questions
- Stepping into a story

--Connecting story to his own life

--Questioning

--Clarifying

--Predicting

Leon also responded in other ways, such as touching books and announcing observations on the illustrations, but these categories were too small to be useful in this discussion.

Observations on text. In the both the small group and whole-class read-alouds and group-shared writing events, Leon looked carefully at the text accompanying the illustrations. He also listened to the story carefully and noted when a line or word would be repeated (e.g., 10/p.6). His attention to the appearance of words sparked, in one small-group session, a discussion of which words the children knew.

Leon: I want to see the cat word.

David: I know how to spell "cat"--C, A, T.

Jeane: You are right. See, c-a-t, cat. (pointing to the text)

(Later, David is looking at each page for "cat." I read on in the book, until I reach the word "corn," and Leon interrupts.)

Leon: I found the word "corn!"

Jeane: Yea, you found the word "corn." How do you spell it?

Leon: C-o-r-n, corn.

(A few minutes later, David asks another word-related question.)

David: What d-o-g mean?

Jeane: Dog.

David: I know how to spell that.

Jeane: Good job, David.

Leon: I know how to spell "God." [It's] the same way you spell "dog" just dog, god, almost like you spell dog, but it's *backwards*! (29/p.3)

Leon's enthusiasm for reading group and spelling words made sense when I observed how he responded to being able to see print on the page and the value he attached to being able to spell words. He also enthusiastically read words along with me during

the small group readings (a situation in which he could see the print on the page) (29/p.4) and also repeated lines from stories along with his teachers.

[Mrs. Tyler is reading *Always My Dad* (Wyeth, 1995)]
 (reading along) . . . Even in the dark, from far away, I could tell who it was.
 Daddy, Daddy, (Leon is saying "Daddy, Daddy" along with her) my brothers
 began shouting and running. (39/p.3)

He also repeated a line from a story when in the small group with me (32/p.5) and marveled at the length of one of Devon's stories ("Look at all those words!" [22/p.8]). These responses suggest an engagement with the words in a story, both when listening and when participating in the reading. When able to look at the text, he wanted to investigate the words by examining their structure and, in one case, quantity. When listening, however, he seemed to like saying the words--hearing them roll off his tongue--and becoming part of the storytelling experience.

Responding to efferent questions. Leon knew the rules for participation read-aloud and group-shared writing. He responded to efferent questions enthusiastically--volunteering frequently and generally raising his hand. I noticed that, in some of the examples, I did not always write whether or not he raised his hand, but the teacher acknowledged him by calling his name before he spoke. Sometimes she also nodded toward him to give him the floor. On two occasions, he became so enthusiastic that he answered before being called upon, but the teacher re-taught hand raising.

He appeared to respond to efferent questions equally frequently regarding both literature and group-shared writing by classmates. Mrs. Smith would generally ask recall questions after a child shared his or her story. After Lauren shared a story, Mrs. Smith was not getting the answers she wanted.

Mrs. S: Yes, and then he asks himself a question. What did he ask?
 David, what question did he ask? Frog's by himself, and he's
 been climbing in the tall tall grass, and then he says, "hmmm."
 David: A surprise.

- Mrs. S.: No, what does he ask, Mary?
 Mary: (pause--no response)
 Mrs. S: The question he asks. (She pauses and points to Leon, who has his hand up.)
 Leon: "Where is the cat?"
 Mrs. S: Where is the cat? That's his friend. And then what happens in the middle of the story. . . . (34/p.2)

Leon's responses to the teachers' questions included recalling that Booker T.

Washington was the subject of *More Than Anything Else* (Bradby, 1995) and identifying what the story middle of *Ducky* (Bunting, 1997) might be. He enthusiastically stated, "ooh, ooh, oh--it's like, in the middle, he tries to solve his problem" (21/p.10). In the time I observed in this class, Leon was never removed from the group and seated elsewhere during any reading time because he could not engage in read-aloud or group-shared writing time according to the norms for participation. His authority as a question-answerer connected, I think, with the clarifying behaviors I also saw him demonstrate.

Stepping into story. I characterized responses as "stepping into story" if they suggested a lived through experience with the story. In these responses, Leon made spontaneous (and sometimes "called out") reflections or surprised reactions to the content of the stories; he often directed his comments at his peers and teacher. He also spoke to characters in this kind of response. The comments served to connect him with the community of readers as he experienced the story. For instance, in one story shared by another child, the main character pulls out a handgun. Leon responded immediately with "Aaaaaah!" as if he were there in the story with the characters (42/p.7). In another example, when a story character was supposed to sing a Christmas song but instead burst into a verse of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm," Leon exclaimed, as if he were chastising the child, "That's not Christmas" (30/14). Finally, after a page in *First Pink Light* (Greenfield, 1991), he commented, "His dad came in

quietly--cool!" When I completed the next page, he remarked, "That was so cute!" and connected the scene of the sleeping child to his own soon-to-be-born baby sister.

He spoke to characters by "answering" them when they would ask questions within the story. For example, as I read *Kinda Blue* (Grifalconi, 1993), he spoke to the uncle character twice.

Jeane: (reading--a character talking) . . . "I bet I knows every one of them. They're exactly the same."

Leon: (interrupting) They're not exactly the same.
(Later, I am reading again.)

Jeane: (reading--a character talking) . . . "You think all the corn in this field be 'bout the same?"

Leon: Nuh uh; they're not. 'Cause see, some of them have all different colors--red and blue.

David: Mhmmm. (nods)

Leon: Yellow, you're gonna see all these colors. (29/pp.3-4)

During a whole class reading, Mrs. Smith prompted the students to consider how the tiny, tiny boy could solve the problem of the big, big cow that would not stand still (VanLaan, 1993).

Mrs. S: Travis, what could the boy do to make the cow stand still?
(Travis responds, and Precious is initiating other readings--excerpts in Chapter Six.)

Mary: Make a deal with the cow.

Mark: Tell her NOT to stand still.

Sam: She should punish the cow.

Mrs. S: What kind? What kind of punishment?

Sam: Put him in his room. [Funny, they did not note this is a female cow.]

(Pat says to put "him in his room." Someone else suggests to put her into the barn.)

Leon: They're scaring the cow.

Mrs. S: Oh, how was he talking to the cow? Was he talking nicely to the cow, Leon?

Leon: No.

(Precious initiates more readings, and a nonparticipant suggests that the boy could be mean to the cow and throw sticks at her.)

Leon: No, no, that would not work. She's going to be scared.
(22/p.21)

Leon spoke with concern for the cow, as her advocate, despite her existence only in the pages of a book.

I observed Leon in an odd response while the class watched a video of *Paddle-to-the-Sea*. The video followed the book's text and illustrations, and the children responded spontaneously by calling out their thoughts.

Pat: Uh, oh.

Leon: Paddle, better watch out behind you!

(A nonparticipant comments, and Billy holds the classroom copy of the book open to find the page represented in the video. The other students look at it.)

Leon: They froze Paddle. (incredulous)

Billy: I found the page! (He walks to the front of the group to show it.)

Leon: But they're gonna finish the book. (upset) (18/p.7)

Mrs. Tyler had not completed the reading of *Paddle-to-the-Sea* at the time the video was broadcast to the school, and Leon did not want to see the conclusion of the story prematurely. Again, Leon, warning Paddle to beware lest he be frozen, speaks directly to the characters in the story as if he were there with them. Leon's responses suggest that he was familiar with the value of literature for vicarious experiences. I suspect this familiarity came from frequent read-alouds at home.

Connecting story to own life. Leon made personal connections frequently. After hearing a classmate's story, he frequently spoke of similarities between the story and his own life. When Precious wrote about getting her own bedroom, the teacher called upon Leon. "I have a comment," he stated. "My big brother got moved into his own room cause my granddad was going away" (35/pp.9-10). In other reading conversations, he connected (as in his small group readings) the content to his anticipated baby sister, but also to his fondness for Thanksgiving (29/p.5), to his grandfather's farm (43/p.7), and to his parents' challenging work schedules (43/p.9).

After reading Greenfield (1991), I gave him a chance to draw something that represented the story.

Jeane: Leon, tell us about what you wrote.

Leon: I drew a pillow, and I write "baby."

Jeane: And why did you write the word "baby?"

Leon: Because it makes me think about the baby my mother's having.

Jeane: And what was your favorite part of the book?

Leon: Here's my favorite part--right here. Because when they mix all those colors up.

Jeane: So he likes the page where it shows the dad's face, and it has all the colors.

Leon: I like how they mixed them all up and it makes a cool color.

(32/pp.5-6)

In the preceding response, Leon connected both with the pillow as a personal symbol of the new baby but also remarked about the kinds of colors used in the illustration. The illustration comment represents a rarity in this study--careful, student-initiated talk about literary elements. I suspect that Leon may have made personal connections with more frequency than Precious because he was a more skilled participant at acquiring speaking turns in the large group, usually raising his hand before speaking. He might also have had more confidence than Precious, because of his social place in the peer group, that others in the class would care about his experiences.

Questioning. When in doubt, Leon asked questions. I noticed he questioned on only one occasion in the classroom, however, and primarily used questioning in the small group readings with me. He asked questions in order to make sense of the story. When reading Greenfield (1991), he asked, "How could he stay up that late?" and questioned the child's behavior. Later, he stated his hypothesis with the intonation of a question: "He's staying up because his daddy's coming home?" I noticed his repeated use of statements as he posed his hypothesis about the story. He continued questioning throughout the Greenfield read-aloud, and I wonder if something about this particular story or reading context prompted him to feel safe in posing questions.

Clarifying. Leon became a resource for the class when the read-alouds or group-shared writing contained unfamiliar vocabulary or content. He described to his classmates what cracklings were (29/p.17), provided background information on President Kennedy's assassin (37/p.5), and demonstrated the sound that wind makes (41/p.4). In each of these instances, he was an enthusiastic, although prompted, volunteer and spoke with apparent confidence regarding the information he had to share. As Mark shared his mystery story with the class (one which included all of the popular White classmates and Travis), he mentioned that the "butler" would be the keeper of the much sought-after missing jewel.

- Precious: (interrupting) What's a butler?
 Leon: I know. (Several other say, "I know," too.)
 Mrs. Smith: I bet Leon could tell you.
 Leon: A butler is somebody who fixes your food for you.
 Mrs. Smith: Chris, what do you think?
 Chris: I agree. (Several other voices agree, too.) (42/p.8)

Thus, Leon was perceived by both his classmates and his teacher as a reliable source of information to make the "meaning" of a text clearer. He appeared happy to elaborate on the stories they read.

Predicting. Leon also predicted the course of stories. He did this during the reading of the highly-predictable book *The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything* (Williams, 1986). Mrs. Tyler read the text and filled in the "blank" she provided.

- Intern: (reading) This time, the little old lady did not stop. She did not stop at all. She-- (pause)
 Leon: Ran. She would be so scared. (He motions like running.) (17/p.9)

When a prediction question was posed by the teacher, he also responded by answering. For example, when Mrs. Smith asked students what kind of character they thought

would be in *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* (Miller, 1994), Leon responded, "She's a little girl" (41/p.1), basing his prediction on the cover's illustration.

Summary of oral responses. Leon participated verbally in storytime enthusiastically and often. Unlike some of his other African American classmates, Leon easily adjusted his behaviors to suit the protocol of read-aloud and group-shared writing time and acquired his speaking turns with minimal difficulty. In his responses, he demonstrated personal connections with and involvement in stories, an ability to clarify and supplement the background information available to the other readers, and a desire to participate in question and answer sessions the teacher initiated. The connections he demonstrated suggest that his socialization into the literate culture of home prepared him for similar experiences in school.

Other Reading-Time Behaviors

During the read-alouds and group-shared writing time, Leon's behaviors contrasted with those of Precious. While Precious moved about the room and engaged in other activities during read-alouds and group-shared writing, Leon was almost always sitting still in his chosen seat (on the floor) during these times. Even when other children sitting near him played, he generally ignored them or engaged in the redirection I described earlier in the chapter. In fact, observing Leon required special attention because I realized that I was more likely to overlook times when he "sits on his bottom" and "sits still" than I was the more active behaviors of some of his African American classmates.

Leon usually sat near Sam, and they regularly hugged or held hands during read-alouds or group-shared writing time, but these behavior did not interfere with the children's attention to the stories being read. Leon's visible affection for Sam mirrored that of Precious' hair braiding activities except that Sam was always a willing partner

for Leon while Pat was almost never willing to interact with Precious except when she braided hair. They both participated well in post-story discussions. Sam and Leon's behavior also did not appear to bother Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Tyler.

Summary

Leon's easy integration into the culture of school made read-aloud and group-shared writing time very different experiences for him than they were for his classmate, Precious. He knew school rules, obeyed the teacher's instructions for participation in story time, and followed his own interests in his writing. Precious, on the other hand, struggled to have her thoughts heard in read-aloud conversations. Not following the implicit and explicit rules for participation in storytime prevented her from sharing her thoughts with the same confidence that she did in small group interactions. While Leon, well-liked by everyone, wrote about a range of topics--most of which were not literature related--Precious used her writing as a tool for access to a peer group that did not want her. Leon also demonstrated the ability to make validated connections with the read-alouds and group-shared writing; I suspect his ability to easily connect text with life is related to the kinds of literate socialization in his home.

CHAPTER 8

A LOOK AT THE CLASS: RESPONSE DURING READ-ALOUDS AND GROUP-SHARED WRITING

Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the categories of response I observed during read-alouds and group-shared writing. I also discuss the differences between read-alouds and group-shared writing, compare a few read-aloud sessions, and analyze the responses of African American students to literature with African American characters.

Since my analysis of response within the large group seemed to show some differences in response according to ethnicity, I thought a look at the whole-class categories that showed the most difference might be useful. I first analyzed this data by coding response categories from all of my whole-class data (i.e., read-alouds and group-shared writing). Next, I divided the responses into two groups, based on the race of the responding child (see rationale for this decision below). I then checked the frequency of response within each response category and responding group. Finally, I qualitatively analyzed those response categories that indicated either (1) a large number of responses (frequency) relative to other categories or (2) a large discrepancy between the frequency of African American and White children engaging in that response.

In the first part of this chapter, I will describe data from read-alouds and group-shared writing experiences. I will not analyze the data from the small-group interviews and small group read-alouds since those groups were exclusively African

American and would overrepresent the frequency of particular kinds of responses. Furthermore, I will discuss only those kinds of responses that were most frequent in my transcripts--movement, calling out, touching books, writing based on stories, oral response to illustrations, verbally trying to make sense of story, observations of text (letters and words), and initiating/abandoning readings. I will, however, make mention of the categories for which the differences appeared to be minimal.

I would like to preface this analysis with a few important limitations I see in this chapter. First, in collecting and analyzing these data, I was the single collector of data. In the busy classroom environment, having only one researcher is a limitation; one person can not begin to capture everything that happens in a classroom. So, for whole group experiences, *especially*, the verbal data have been filtered through me, my perceptions, and my physical ability to document every exchange. Second, the first analysis (broken down by race rather than ethnicity) suggests trends only in this particular classroom. Further research would be needed to demonstrate that these differences are racial/ethnic in nature rather than socioeconomic, although Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) note that race and economic autonomy are highly related. I break the responses into racial, rather than ethnic, categories here for simplicity's sake only. To do so by ethnicity would present a number of logistical problems since I cannot categorize White students' ethnic identities; I did not develop ethnic profiles on any White child. Nevertheless, I believe that the data offer some useful ways to think about how children are responding, who is responding, and why. Although Hilliard (1992) cautions that "efforts to attribute precise cultural identities to individuals are certain to be fraught with error," he explains that "central tendencies within groups" (p.371) are worthy of examination. Despite these trends in response patterns, I fully acknowledge that individual students occasionally responded in ways that defied the pattern--particularly those children whose ethnicities differed within a racial group.

In the second part of this chapter, I will analyze the similarities and differences between the read-aloud and group-shared writing experiences. I will also compare three *typical* read-aloud observations with one *good* read-aloud observation. Finally, I will assess how African American children reacted to African American literature.

Response

Movement

Physical movement among African American children in the class was evident at all times of day, including read-alouds and group-shared writing times. During the read-alouds and group-shared writings I observed, African American children engaged in visible physical movement approximately four times more often than their White counterparts ($n = 133$ and $n = 31$, respectively). Some of these movements were, as noted in the case-study chapters, unrelated to the read-aloud or group-shared writing (e.g., braiding, fighting, hugging, playing with markers and toys, walking around) but were often connected to the social reading event. Most of the African Americans' unrelated behaviors involved social interactions with other children.

Other movement behaviors, however, were clearly related to the read alouds and/or group-shared writing. For instance, among the African American students, reading-related movements I observed included pointing at the book/journal, "scooting" to see the book better, waving hands to seek attention for verbal response, walking up to a reader, hopping up in enthusiasm for a story while answering an efferent question, and trying to handle and see the journal of the child who was sharing. I also saw the African American children use physical movement to indicate a like or dislike for a reader. For instance, as Shade stood to share her journal, Tiffany put her fingers in her ears, and Latresa covered her ears with her hands (12/p.10).

In contrast, less-frequent movement-behaviors of the White students did not seem as clearly related to the read-aloud or group-shared writing experience. Just like

the African American students, they engaged in unrelated behaviors. I observed the checking of shoes, adjusting of blue jeans, and the putting of arms into shirts (inside the armholes) on cold mornings. Occasionally, a White child would move away in response to an African American child's movement toward the White child. Generally, however, the White children's behaviors were solitary--not social and thus not subject to disciplinary action. When White children responded to the read-alouds and group-shared writing, their responsive behaviors included mirroring hand motions being made by the teacher as she read, scooting forward to see the book better, and a limited number of hand-wiggles to gain access to talk. The White children's movements were significantly fewer in number than the African American children's. Movement during a read-aloud or group-shared writing time was a specific activity that the teachers explicitly discouraged and which prompted the teachers to redirect a child or to impose a negative consequence. Thus, African American children were penalized more frequently than White children because this mode was used more often by the African American children.

Calling Out

Calling out is a mode of response used frequently by African American children in this class; their instances far outnumbered the White children's responses ($n = 228$ and $n = 92$, respectively). African American children more than twice as likely to call out responses than the White children. These are very modest estimates since most "calling out" examples were categorized by content rather than mode. This category includes those responses of children that were made (1) without a teacher verbally recognizing the speaker prior to the comment and (2) in exclamation form. The content of these "calling out" comments is analyzed in other categories of specific kinds of response (e.g., connection with own life, recalling a text, making predictions).

However, the method by which the child made the response public had a lot to do with how the response was received, so I think this category is worth examination--even if it is more a category of *mode* of response than it is *content or level* of response.

I found that the "calling out" of the African American children served several purposes. First, children called out in order to appeal for better reading conditions. They appealed for (1) orderly conduct among children during read-alouds and group-shared writing (e.g., David yells, "Don't yell out!" and Precious asks, "Please tell us and read"); (2) permission to talk (e.g., Latresa interjects "I wanna tell you something!"); (3) or for better visual or auditory support during the read-aloud and group-shared writing (e.g., David complains, "I can't see" and "Man, I can't hear!"). Each of these calling out behaviors suggests a desire by the student to get on with the read-aloud and to participate fully in the experience, by hearing the words and having a clear view of the illustrations.

Children also called out in response to efferent questions by the teacher. Latresa was particularly prone to doing this, although each of the African American children engaged in this activity. In general, these responses were not validated.

[Intern is reading *Paddle-to-the-Sea* (Holling, 1941/69).]

I: (reading) "Paddle finds. . . the biggest lake."

(To the class) What's the biggest lake?

Latresa: (yelling) Lake Erie!

I: No, raise your hand. (07p.15)

Although Latresa's response was incorrect, Mrs. Tyler was not responding to the content of the (efferent) response but rather was addressing the mode of response (i.e., calling out).

African American children exclaimed their predictions to the story, as well as their insights on the developing plot (e.g., "I knew it!"). Scattered in the calling out

data are examples of several other kinds of response, including connections with own lives (e.g., "I stayed up all night"), sharing personal reactions (e.g., "Aaaaaah!" and "It's not scary!"), and repeating what had been read. Again, these categories of response content are analyzed separately.

In contrast, the White children's "calling out" responses included only one example of appeal (e.g., "I can't see") and a couple of sound-effect exclamations. For instance, a nonparticipant and Chris made howling and "gagagaga" noises to accompany (or mimic) the sounds being made by the reader. There were two examples of prediction and two examples of calling out an observation--one addressing an illustration and one addressing the chapter number. Only one efferent question response was included in this category. White children generally answered efferent questions by first being recognized by the teachers.

These findings suggest that the African American children in this class were far more likely than their White counterparts to appeal for better reading conditions and to exclaim their answers to efferent questions before receiving teacher permission to speak. Although all children participated in predictions and sharing insights/observations, the African American children were more likely to have done so in ways that could be categorized as "calling out." If we note that calling out was highly discouraged by the teachers (except during "fill-in-the-blank" experiences), we can begin to see why more African American children than White children were excluded from some read-alouds and group-shared writing events.

Touching Books

The African American children also showed a higher frequency (approximately twice as often) of touching books during read-alouds and group-shared writing ($n = 11$ and $n = 5$). The kinds of touching that the children did seemed relatively similar

with the exception of one kind--what I have labeled "aesthetic touching." Aesthetic touching is when the child seems to be touching the book just for the pleasure of touching an illustration. For instance, after Mark shared his mystery story (one in which most of the White children were named as characters, but Travis was the only African American included), Latresa and Precious reached up to touch his journal and pointed (not for the benefit of anyone I could observe) to the illustrations. Shade also did something like this when Mrs. Tyler sat near her during a read-aloud; it was as if touching the book was almost magical. Latresa actually took the book from the teacher after the teacher read *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* (Miller, 1994). Latresa then held up the book for the children to see, much like the behavior of a teacher. I had observed Latresa do this on numerous occasions during the transition to "Skills" time, but on this occasion she did it in the presence of the entire group.

African American children also used touching as means of indicating the subject of a question they had--such as what an item in an illustration was (e.g., "What do this do?"). I did not observe the White children engage in this kind of questioning, but since the White children's total number of touching instances is so small, I can not know if this is a significant difference or if the White children would have done this if only they had had more questions.

Children used touching the book as a way to point out something they had observed (e.g., "That's a 'K'"), but the White children did so more frequently. Mary pointed to the book when helping students count the fins on a fish, and Melinda pointed to an item the teacher had asked about ("It's right there"). These kinds of touching seemed more like demonstrations or question-answering techniques than the kinds of aesthetic touching I observed among the African American children. These kinds of touching also seemed to have more authority than the kinds of touching the African American children did because the White children were using touch to show

what they knew, whereas the African American children were mostly using touch to help ask questions and for pleasure. Again, however, I hesitate to make generalizations on this category of response since the total number of response episodes was so small.

It makes sense that the African American children would be more likely than the White children to reach out and touch books and journals being held by someone else. Since these children were generally willing, at other times of day, to touch things about which they were curious or things that they liked (e.g., computer, tape recorder, toys), the touching response is consistent with their behavior at other times of the day.

Writing Based on Stories

This category of response includes just those stories that children orally shared during group-shared writing time. Although I could have evaluated the stories in students' writing portfolios, I felt ill-prepared to definitively categorize writing that I had not heard the child share with the class. I might have perceived a literature link when none was there. Instead, I recorded only stories that I heard children share with the class. Of the response categories, this is perhaps the hardest to summarize because of the multitude of written ways in which children responded to literature through writing. I have categorized as "literature-related" any children's writing that clearly was influenced by books--or by a classmate's group-shared writing that was in response to a book. This includes children's stories with characters borrowed from literature, plots adapted from literature, and words copied from literature. I may not have been able to evaluate whether or not all of the children's writing was literature-related since I was not informed of every book that was read in my absence. Therefore, I might not have recognized a child's story as literature-related if I had not read the story that inspired the child's writing. African American students shared

stories that I recognized as literature-related approximately half as often as their White classmates ($n = 26$ stories and $n = 45$ stories, respectively).

I will begin with the trends in the White children's responses. Among the first and second grade White girls, a social writing group formed. Lisa headed that group, drafting literature-related stories of her own invention, and later was often imitated by Karen, Pat, Mary, and Melinda. (Some information on this phenomenon is explained elsewhere in this report.) Stories and topics that were addressed by most of these girls included stories about bad squirrels, traveling on the Great Lakes by canoe, animals' fights over hill ownership, magical gardens, night on the farm, and prairie life. The girls also gathered to collaborate, in pairs or trios, on literature related stories (e.g., "The Girl Who Wasn't Afraid of Anything"). A few examples from the girls' literature-related stories follow.

[Two responses to Nikola-Lisa's (1991) *Night is Coming*.]

The nite is coming. dedacatid to my famly. on the from (farm) the cats are sntreshing (stretching) the dogs are scrashing and the radits are hapaly hoping. (12/09/97--story by Pat. The story is accompanied by a semi-circle illustration of the sunset at the bottom half of the page. The sun's rays are depicted by squiggly lines around the semi-circle.)

Night is going on the farm Night is going.

(next page) the cats on the Farm are waking up doing there stracis (stretches)

(next page) the dogs are holeing (howling) on the farm wacing up.

(next page) the rabbits on the farm are waking up hoping happyle.

(next page) But the olw (owl) was aslep.

(11/24/97--story by Mary. The illustrations are set at the bottom of the page and include a semi-circle illustration of a sunrise with squiggly lines like Pat's.)

[Two responses to Ehrlert's (1993) *Nuts to You*.]

The Bad Bad Squirrel. One day a squirrel was going to git a nut to eat. he saw a nut it did not look like a nut from a tree.

(next page) The next day he wit to git some wether so he wit to the lake waer The Bevers mad the dam. he Brk the dam. The Bevers seid Be gooder nexetiem.

(next page) The Bevers and the Bunnys sied we ned to techte to be good so they had A plan

(next page) They bit (built) a dam The Bunnys wer hoping on the dam The squirrel saw Them and came to Them and sied iH wet are you doing The squirrel wit on the dam The dam brok it and the fish tok hem to the nill and a ball fall down the hill he tie and Rgold down the hill he had no fiends and he wit home

(next page) The squirrel sied to his sefl I Bne Bad so I wall Be good.

(next page) so the sqirel gava some flowers to the Bunny and gava some wood to the Bevers. The squirrel never bin bad for a lon time. The End
(Story by Lisa--09/17/97)

The Bad Bad Squirrel and racoon by Mary and Pat

(next page) one day I mant a squirrel by the trre. I raccoon lett him in sid

(next page) They Borok the china vase togorthor squirrel siad le'ts Barck the Bevre house Bevre siad way (why) did you do that Because were Bad. Next's they Borok the hroses house

(next page) hours (horse) siad way (why) did you do thaht Because were Bad rite racoon. so they went up in the tree and tohe (thought) of waht to do

(next page) The squirrel siad let's go and Brack some more stuff. No siad racoon maBy later. let's play hindingoseek in the yard. ok siad squirrel!

(Story by Karen and Pat--11/06/97)

Despite the clear connections between the children's writing and books that were read to the class, the writing samples also represent connections between children in a social group. Lisa's story about the "bad, bad squirrel" had been popular for some time when Karen and Pat drafted their story about the raccoon. In fact, Pat thought that Lisa had read a published book entitled "The Bad, Bad Squirrel" because she asked Mrs. Smith if she could borrow a book with that title, prompting Mrs. Smith to explain to the class how Lisa had used Ehler's work as a springboard for her own journal writing. The farm illustrations by Pat and Mary mirror one another possibly more than they reflect the published book, suggesting the social responsiveness of writing.

Other White children, particularly the younger children and the boys, drafted work unrelated to this group. They wrote inventive mystery stories or other, independent, literature-related stories. Tyler and Chris wrote stories about being in trees. Kaley spent most of the year writing about her own topics or copying words

from books she liked, such as *Eating the Alphabet* (Ehlert, 1989) and *The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything* (Williams, 1986).

The African American children's responses included much more text copying than the White group did, but this may be more related to the relative number of children in each age group than it is related to cultural group membership. For instance, young Billy regularly spent his journal time copying from books such as *In The Tall Tall Grass* (Fleming, 1991), and *Comet's Nine Lives* (Brett, 1996).

Precious, Travis, and Leon did far more literature-related writing than any of their African American peers. Leon learned to write in chapters by hearing stories from classmates and his teacher. Travis sometimes wrote brief, two-or three-sentence stories that were take-offs of literature he had read (e.g., "Grass for Lunch"). He composed a short piece, for instance, after hearing VanLaan's (1993) *The Tiny, Tiny Boy and the Big, Big Cow*. Travis's story read as follows:

Once upon a Time There was a Tiny Tiny Boy and The Big Big Dog He Trid to walk.

(next page) But He WuTiT Walk He pull The Tiny Tiny Boy Home (12/02/97)

Precious, however, not only wrote the kinds of involved stories being written by the White girls (e.g., farm stories, Great Lake stories, Mole's Hill stories), but she also did some literature-related writing of her own, such as a piece on Martin Luther King, Jr. and an "I Spy" interactive piece.

I spy a grle (accompanied by pictures of four items, one of which is a girl)

I spy a boy and the ous (owls) (accompanied by pictures of a door, an owl, and two children) (10/97)

Overall, the White children wrote almost twice as many literature-related journal entries than the African-American children, even though they each wrote daily. I believe the social acceptability of the literature-related storywriting bonded the White girls' peer group and that children who wanted to participate in or move into that peer

group also composed literature-related pieces. Thus, the African American children (or other White children) who did not have a desire to move in the White social circle had no need to write those kinds of stories. Instead, they wrote equally engaging stories about their daily lives, their friends, and other make-believe stories--occasionally, but not regularly, linked to literature.

Verbal Response to Illustrations

There was not much difference in how *often* each group of children responded verbally to the illustrations ($n = 23$ and $n = 16$), but there did appear to be a difference in *how* they responded to the illustrations. I noticed differences in the purposes for which children were speaking of illustrations.

African American children used their comments to share what they thought they had "figured out" that their classmates had not yet discovered about illustrations. For instance, during the reading of *The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything* (Williams, 1986), when the teacher had read far enough to reach the illustration of the top hat, Billy exclaimed, "I know who it was! Abraham Lincoln" (16/p.17). On another occasion, while the teacher read *Borreguita and the Coyote* (Aardema, 1991), both David and Billy exclaimed simultaneously that the "cheese" the foolish coyote had been chasing was, in fact, "the moon!" (26/p.16). I noted a number of instances in which both David and Billy announced their interpretations of illustrations. I saw only one instance of this kind of response among the White children, and it was post-event. Lisa, when seeing the salt mines in *More Than Anything Else* (Bradby, 1995), reflected "That white stuff is salt. I thought it was snow" (03/p.8). I was surprised by this finding since the African American children's responses to illustrations show more authority and confidence relative to the kinds of responses they demonstrated when touching or pointing to books.

All children shared their observations on the more obvious characteristics of the illustrations. Most of these comments began with an "I see" preface and stated something relatively apparent from the pictures. Examples of these kinds of comments include "I see a puppy dog," "The baby was smiling," "I don't see no popsicle," and "They had a star on it; I saw it" (35/p.19; 29/p.10; 07/p.5; 26/p.6). I saw no obvious differences in which children offered their observations or how they delivered them, except that the African American girls, Latresa and Tiffany, were the only students to exclaim their observations.

Orally Trying to Make Sense of Story

This category of response bears some similarity to the verbal responses to literature, except that the content of children's responses addressed the story content rather than the story illustrations. A verbal response was categorized as "trying to make sense of story" if the child's remark indicated a thought-in-progress as he or she engaged with the story. Within this larger category, I found several, more specific types of response, including questioning, hypothesizing, predicting, arguing, and clarifying misconceptions.

As I looked between the responses of the African American students and the White students, I found no striking differences in either (1) the frequency of this response category or (2) the more specific types of response within it ($n = 20$ and $n = 26$). Children hypothesized (although African American children were slightly more inclined to verbalize those hypotheses), questioned, and made predictions. I did notice that only White children "argued"--a specific type of response connected to rebutting the truthfulness of something someone else had said in their story. For instance, while hearing a story about a flying fish, Pat remarked, "But they can't get out of the water and fly" (12/p.9). In another example, Tyler explained, "There's no

such thing as a secret river" (34/p.14) while the teacher read Rawlings' (1955) *The Secret River*. It is possible that White children's resistance to stories that deviate far from realistic situations might be because of how they have been socialized to perceive story (Gee, 1989; Heath, 1983).

In only one example did children appear to use connections with their own lives to make sense of a story, but the discussion was initially ignited by a teacher comment. After reading *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* (Miller, 1994), students seemed confused by the post-death ritual (portrayed in the book) of stopping clocks and hanging sheets over mirrors. Sensing this, the teacher initiated a discussion.

[Ms.S reads on..."Zora felt as if she had died....But then she could sit still no more." (end of page)]

- Ms.S: They did some special things to observe a death in the family.
And some people do things like that today when someone dies.
- Mary: What did they do?
- Ms.S: They stopped the clock, and they put a sheet over the mirror.
- Mary: Why?
- Ms.S: Well, that was their tradition. I think they wanted to remember what time, the exact time that the mom died.

(Leon has his hand up.)

- Ms.S: Leon?
- Leon: Once, I thought, my grandma was crying because a bee had stinged her, but it wasn't.
- Ms.S.: What was it?
- Leon: Because we was at somewhere, uh, a graveyard.
- Ms.S.: What was she doing at the graveyard, Leon?
- Leon: She was crying.
- Ms.S: But did she take anything there or do anything at the graveyard?
- Leon: She had a paper towel.
- Melinda: Ms. Smith, when my mom's mom died, my mom came home, she told me, and I was sad, and I kept crying all the way . . . and I was crying and crying all night.
- Ms.S: Did your family do anything like this, Melinda? (i.e., like the book)
- Melinda: Kind of--we moved around furniture.
- Karen's hand up: My grandpa died.

- Ms.S.: Yeah, that's right. We've had some deaths in our families this year in our class, but you know what--
- Travis: My (?unintelligible?) died.
- Ms.S.: And did your family do any special things at that time?
- Travis: We gave flowers. (41/p.8)

In sum, many children participated in the oral process of making meaning of the story content, and the differences between how African American students and White students did this were minimal.

Observations on Text--Letters and Words

African American children slightly outnumbered White children on observations of the text, even when the small group readings were not figured into the totals ($n = 14$ and $n = 10$, respectively). This is interesting, since the African American students exhibited a high interest in the text during the small group readings. I did notice some minor differences in the kinds of observations children made.

The African American children commented on the *sounds* of specific words, when none of the White children did so. For example, Billy announced "That's rhyming words," and Leon noticed, "They keep repeating that" (i.e. a line from the story). Children showed interest in the length of stories (e.g., "Now this is what I call a lot of words!") and in what the text looked like--the style of the lettering and the specific words represented on the page. I noticed that the only examples of text-focused *questioning* came from White participants, one of whom asked "What's a bladder?" while another suggested disbelief of Rawlings' choice of name for a character: "Buggyhorse?"

Initiating and Abandoning Readings

I used this category to code any child independently choosing to read a book (or choosing to end a reading early for unknown reasons) while in my presence. I noticed, as I coded, that the African American children seemed to be finding more

opportunities to read for pleasure than the White children were ($n = 20$ and $n = 9$). More surprising to me, given the low reading achievement of some of the children who were reading more often, was that the White children who were accomplished readers seemed to be spending the least amount of time reading.

What first appeared ironic, however, soon made more sense as I analyzed other data from the study. First, Latresa, Tiffany, Billy, David, and Precious were frequent independent initiators of readings. I noticed that they were reading at two main times in the schedule. First, they often picked up books to read or browse during read-alouds and group-shared writing time--a behavior that frequently was stopped by the teacher. The other time they often read books was when they were done with their writing. Since they were not writing (with the occasional exception of Precious) the lengthy, chaptered story replications the White girls were writing, they completed their daily journal activities in less time than their counterparts and thus had more time for choosing and reading books.

One interracial episode I found interesting occurred after Latresa and Tyler had been in some kind of argument. Although I missed the specifics of what had transpired, I did see Mrs. Smith send the two children to sit on a rug together and work out their problems while she continued with her regular instruction. I watched from a distance as Tyler talked to Latresa, and she avoided looking at him, saying "I don't know" to all of his conversation initiators and flipping through a crate of books. I looked away to focus back on the class, and when I checked on them again, Latresa was holding and reading aloud *Pickle Things* (Brown, 1980) while Tyler watched and listened. Thereafter, their problems appeared to be over; the read-aloud represented something they had in common.

Discussion

Although I make many qualifications on the content of this section, especially since I am dividing responses by race, I do think that the findings suggest which kinds of response warrant further attention in other research studies. For instance, I think that if physical movement and "calling out" are not response modes teachers expect or want from students during read-aloud and group-shared writing time, then we need to seriously examine the mismatch between these ways young students demonstrate literacy and how they are allowed to participate in literate events. In this study, the African American children were far more likely to be moved from the read-aloud and group-shared writing group, retained in the building during recess, or verbally redirected than were the White children. If we do not want to perpetuate racist practices, perhaps we should consider the consequences of our practice for children of minority groups. The findings of this chapter also suggest that how a child is situated within the social hierarchy of the classroom peer community influences how he or she will demonstrate his or her literacy. In this study, the response-mode in vogue was the written literature-related story, and if anyone wanted to be a part of the White girls' peer group, she would have to participate in the ritual of writing stories based on (1) books and (2) one another's stories.

One question I have asked of this data is, "Where is the analytical response?" By this question, I suggest that I anticipated seeing children engage in the kinds of critical / analytical responses Rosenblatt (1938/68) and May (1995) explain help children develop critical literacy. However, I found these kinds of responses infrequent in my transcripts and subsequent response domains. As I have struggled to find evidence of these response types, I have come to the following conclusions regarding their absence.

First, the teachers in this study worked within the confines of a schedule manipulated by an outside administration. Since the "Skills" reading periods had to be coordinated among all of the classrooms in the school (for the purposes of sharing personnel between grade levels), Mrs. Smith's time for literature groups was cut short. She and Mrs. Tyler were left to scramble, trying to fit literature into the day wherever possible. With limited time available, read-alouds were often rushed or cut short. Under the pressure of the clock, both Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Tyler had to tell students to "hold" their comments until the end of the stories. During one-fifth of the periods I observed, that comment time never came because the read-aloud ended just as children needed to transition to another activity or because the read-aloud was interrupted in mid-stream. To compensate for the lack of student participation in the stories, the teachers devised controlled ways to elicit student talk. These two methods were the fill-in-the-blank experience, a highly controlled way to have students predict, verbalize, and return to listening, and the use of efferent questioning--particularly questioning to which a brief, recall-based response would be sufficient. Both of these methods allow the teachers and students to *perceive* participation in a story even if the circumstances known to be supportive of critical, analytical response are absent. However, these methods are those of teachers who explained they had considerable trouble fitting even one read-aloud a day into the schedule. Working within the scheduling constraints presented to them, the teachers were faced with tough choices: (1) Should they read fewer books but allocate more time per book? (2) Should they strive to read a book a day but adjust their reading techniques to work within the scheduling confines presented to them?

Another factor at work in teachers' decisionmaking was the desire to help all students learn the participant structure of large-group lessons in school. Typical characteristics of that participant structure include hand-raising, teacher recognition of

speakers, and attentive listening behaviors during lessons. Since Mrs. Smith was aware that third-grade teachers judged former Friendship Program children as skills-deficient upon reaching third-grade, she worked especially hard to assure that her students would not be mislabeled upon entering new teachers' classes. If children could learn the behavior expectations most common in schools, they would have an easier time transitioning into work with new teachers and new settings. On the other hand, Mrs. Smith struggled with her decisions, chiding herself for not being a more vocal advocate for the preservation of literature time (e.g., "We need to fight harder for literature time. . . . I'm talking about *one* story per day. Our time is so segmented," 48/pp.1, 3). She also saw the influence of time in the ways she structured her read-alouds. "You're juggling your time," she noted. "You want response, but you have five minutes" (48/p.4). Sadly, she noted, "it [the schedule] gets worse every year."

Perhaps if the teachers had been able to devote more time to the read-alouds, they would have been able to permit and validate all of the children's modes of response. Without that time, however, the permissible modes of response clearly favored the White children in the class since the modes of response popular among the African American students were considered disruptive or not related to the reading. The initiate-response-feedback participant structure increased the White students' potential for receiving validation for their comments and overall encouragement for their participation in read-alouds (e.g., the White students almost always answered the predominantly efferent questions by engaging in the "appropriate" number of steps--responding after being recognized by the teacher).

Read-Alouds of Literature and Group-Shared Writing

In this section, I describe the differences between what occurred during literature read-alouds and what happened during group-shared writing. Because I realize the unconventional nature of analyzing response within the setting for group-shared writing, I know I need to justify using group-shared writing data in my analysis. First, I will briefly describe the settings for both kinds of readings. Next, I will explore similarities between the two kinds of experiences, and then I will describe the differences I perceived in this classroom.

Settings For Read-Alouds and Group-Shared Writing

When Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Tyler held read-alouds and group-shared writing events, the presiding teacher usually sat in a chair in the middle of the room. As the teacher sat beside the bookcase (also situated in the middle of the room), children would sit on a carpet, facing the teacher. Since students chose their own seating, they usually clustered in groups on the rug. Even though children sat in different places on the rug each day, the children's seating patterns were predictable; the White girls sat together, and the African American students sat near one another. Leon and Sam were together almost daily. Although the teacher was the only person at the front of the group during read-alouds, children were invited, one-by-one, to stand beside the teacher for sharing during group-shared writing time. In both settings, the children looked to the teacher for the final indication of who might speak next. The teacher indicated turns by nodding or calling a child by name. I estimate that read-alouds lasted approximately fifteen minutes in duration, while group-shared writing episodes lasted from forty to forty-five minutes. (I did not systematically time the events but make judgments on the basis of memory.)

During read-alouds, the teachers usually introduced a book before reading it to the children. For instance, as Mrs. Smith introduced *'Twas the Night B'fore Christmas* (Rosales, 1996), she tried connect the story with other versions children might have encountered.

Mrs. S.: Now, I want you to look at this story. Because it is another story that is told many different ways, sometimes you will see it with figures that are like, 'toon figures maybe--or modern dress is on the people in the story. I'm going to read this story, and I want Kaley to come sit right in front of me today. (29/p.9)

As the teacher read the book, children were expected to sit quietly unless invited to speak (e.g., through fill-in-the-blanks or efferent questioning). After the reading, if time permitted, the teachers would ask the children for questions and comments related to the book.

During group-shared writing time, the teacher also sometimes introduced stories the children read, (e.g., "Lisa, let's see what you have. Did you finish a story? Okay, now remember to show it and hold your book down so your voice will go over the top of the book to the children," 25/p.2). Children were also called upon by name to simply begin reading without introductions, however. In both settings, the teacher had control over speaking turns. Occasionally, the teachers connected students' writing to writing other students had done or asked the children specific questions (e.g., "tell us your characters first," 21/p.2) before beginning the read.

Similarities Between Group-Shared Writing and Read-Alouds

Earlier in this report, I argued that read-alouds and group-shared writing events were similar in two ways. The participant structures for the two settings were similar, and the material being read aloud was given similar attention and respect by the students listening to read-alouds. In both settings, the teacher had primary power over the distribution of speaking turns as well as the order of story presentation.

I have already described, in Chapter Five, how children acquired a validated speaking turn during the read-aloud event. Briefly, children would raise their hands and wait until recognized by the teacher in some way--either by her calling a child's name, making eye contact and nodding, or by her deciding that the child's speaking without a pre-negotiated turn was okay, after all. Next, children would speak, and the teacher would provide some kind of evaluative feedback. During group-shared writing, the teachers often allowed children to participate in this process of calling upon particular children to ask questions or make comments about the (child-written) story. While the children had the option of calling on audience members to speak, the teachers still had the authority to call on listeners, validate or invalidate the comments of students, and provide consequences to students who were not following the rules of participation in this communicative event. In the following excerpt, Lauren was sharing a story she wrote about how a "girl wished for [a baby], and it came true." She pointed out her illustrations. "This is the girl, and she's fat because she's gonna have a baby."

- Mrs. S: Who's with her?
 Lauren: Her other children.
 Mrs. S: How could you begin to tell us about--What's different about the mom in that picture?
 Lauren: One's fat, and one's skinny. [The page following the fat woman shows a skinny woman holding a baby.]
 Mrs. S: This picture of the mamma is different than the picture of the mamma on the other page.
 Lauren: That's because when the mamma has the baby and she's fat, but not when it comes out of her stomach. . . . I didn't draw a husband yet, and they have three children.
 Mrs. S: So, he's going to be another character in the story, Lauren?
 (31/p.2)

In this episode, Mrs. Smith probed Lauren to tell more about her own story and began moving her into discussion about writing strategies; the dialogue following this excerpt

shows discussions of characters and settings. The teachers had the power, during group-shared writing events, to directly ask the reader questions. The teachers also could ask questions of listeners during group-shared writing.

[Precious has shared her piece on how she likes Lois Ehlert and *Nuts to You*, 1993. Mrs. Tyler begins asking questions of Precious and the listeners.]

Mrs.T: What other Lois Ehlert books could she add?

Child: Feathers for Lunch.

Latresa: NO! She can't!

Mrs.T: What's one of your favorites, Travis?

Travis: (pause) Fish Eyes.

Mrs.T: Why did you like Fish Eyes the best?

Travis: Cause (unintelligible)

Mrs.T: Cause it's what?

Travis: I like that one best.

Mrs.T: You like that one the best? Chris?

Chris: I like Feathers for Lunch.

Mrs.T: Why do you like Feathers for Lunch?

Chris: Because all the cat got was feathers.

Mrs.T: You liked the ending?

(Precious calls on Sam to share next.) (11/p.5)

In all group-shared writing events, the teacher had the final word on which issues would be addressed during or after the reading, and the teachers had the power to initiate discussions, call on speakers, and punish children who did not behave appropriately during group-shared writing.

[Lisa has shared her story about a family of tigers living near the Secret River. She reads all the pages first and then goes back to show the children all the pages. As she shows each one, the children make an "Oooh!" sound as a group. Mrs. Smith chides Devon for being so silly.]

Mrs. S: Lisa, just stop. They are not really interested when they do that, I don't think. That's inappropriate in group. Now, if you want to say something about her illustrations, that's different, but just to make noise, nope, that won't work.

(There is a LONG silence.)

Tiffany's hand is up. "I like her colors," she says.

Mrs.S: You like her colors? Oh, I think that's nice. Billy? What would you like to say about her illustrations?

Billy: I like her drawings.
 Mrs.S: You do? Well, good. (42/p.10)

Clearly, the teacher had the power, during both group-shared writing and read-alouds, to designate speakers and define appropriate modes of response. By calling on Billy and asking what his illustration-related comment was, she set up his comment to be on-topic. The participant structures of the two events were similar, and the teachers' perspectives on proper or improper modes of response affected the children's responses in predictable patterns.

Children also exhibited a reverent attitude toward the stories being read by classmates. Particularly when classmates read lengthy stories, children's behavior patterns were similar to those behaviors demonstrated during literature read-alouds. I noted similarities in visible attentiveness, movement behaviors such as hair braiding, and a desire to see the illustrations of classmates' stories. The most telling indicator of similarity in attitude, I found, however, was the presence of thoughtful oral responses to the children's stories. Children made intertextual connections, personal connections, and evaluative responses. For instance, Latresa responded, "It's like that book with fire!" (42/p.5) and pointed to *The Little House in the Big Woods* (Wilder, 1960) after Pat shared this story.

once upon a time there was a famly how traved the conchry there nams war
 Lora ingld Wilder mery and her littl sister Kery and there ma and there pa.
 (next page) they travld in a coverd wagin Lora liket to see the wesl pop up win
 her fother playd his fidl arand the bom fir
 (next page) after they wher dun playing the fitl they got into the gin and left
 mery and Lara where playing ben porig hot in the bak of the wagin wiy baby
 Kery was seleping.
 [This is as far as Pat gets when Latresa exclaims her response.]

Later that same day, Devon shared a Gingerbread Man story in which he called the old woman and old man "Ma and Pa." Lisa immediately sighed, "Laura always called her dad 'Pa'" (42/p.12).

Children also made personal connections after hearing the stories shared by classmates. After Precious shared her story about visiting her auntie's house where she played with her cousins, Karen raised her hand. Precious called on her to speak, and Karen commented, "I have two aunts. One lives in Chicago, and the other one lives in Florida" (12/p.12). Lisa was very articulate about how hearing her classmates' stories influenced her subsequent writing. She shared a story about a kitten finding a new home. After she finished, she commented on the story's origins.

- Lisa: I thought of Mary when she wrote "Orange." I thought we both [could make] stories like that. Remember, when she said-- there was the part where it was in the "Dark, dark wood?" And I got the [magic] garden from Karen and Lauren.
- Mrs. S: I heard something that sounded like it might have come from Denise Fleming. Did anyone pick that up? What was the part that was similar to the book that Denise Fleming wrote?
- Precious: In the tall, tall grass.
- Mrs. S: Yes, and you (to Lisa) say, "in the" what?
- Lisa: In the meadow. (25/p.4)

These kinds of comparisons and connections were similar to those made during teacher read-alouds since students gave comparable attention to their classmates' stories. Children's responses to group-shared writing were most like the read-aloud response when the child's story was coherently read, lengthy enough to be engaging, and contained illustrations easily discernible from the audience's seating place.

Differences Between Group-Shared Writing and Read-Alouds

I also need to make note of the differences between the read-aloud and group-shared writing events. I analyzed the first half of all group-shared writing protocols to pull out characteristics unique to the group-shared writing experience. Each of the characteristics I describe are somehow related to the students' ownership of the writing being shared.

Strategy focus. First, the teachers more frequently used the group-shared writing experiences to focus attention on strategies used by the (student) author. I noted how the teachers, listeners, or readers would either ask student-writers how they accomplished something or would simply comment on observations of children's technique use. For instance, after Kaley shared a story about a chicken stealing a giraffe egg from a zoo, Mrs. Tyler directed a question at the class. "Did you hear a word in there that was used an awful lot?" she asked (14/p.6). Pat responded, "Then," and Mrs. Tyler asked her to write the word on a chart for all of the children to see. Next, she invited children to guess synonyms for "then." Incidentally, Shade protested this perceived digression by complaining, "I'm not even gettin' to share!" (14/p.6).

In another example, both the teacher *and* the child initiated the strategy-related talk. After sharing the introduction to a story he was writing about some classmates, Leon stopped reading.

- | | |
|----------|--|
| I: | So how many characters does he have in his story, Latresa? |
| Latresa: | Four. |
| I: | Four. (To Leon) You have four characters? . . . Is it raining on all four characters? |
| Leon: | That's all. That's all. That's all. That's all. I left you on the hook. That's all. (21/p.3) |

The "hook" was the term tossed about in regular conversation as the strategy by which some of the children secured a reader's attention by deliberately failing to provide a resolution to a story in-progress (8/p.3). Leon's example shows how both teachers and students initiated talk about writing strategies. Other strategies discussed during group-shared writing time included choosing appropriate illustrations to complement a text (11/p.4), how children found words they wanted to spell (7/p.5; 12/p.11), the differences between genres (11/p.3), punctuation strategies (15/p.6), and the use of patterns like those found in books the class had shared earlier (22/pp.9-10). Mrs. Tyler interrupted one group-shared writing event to ask the class, "Are you listening

to all these story ideas?" (12/p.7). The talk surrounding one of Travis' group-shared writings shows the diverse ways children and teachers talked about writing strategies.

- Travis reads: Once upon a time there was a little duck named Ducky. He was falling off the ship into the ocean. (next page) They floated and float and float until it Tuesday was Wednesday.
- Lisa: I can't hear.
- Travis: And they float until it was Tuesday, and they float until it was Wednesday. (pause)
- Mrs. S: The days of the week in this story are like *Cookie's Week*. Okay, you worked for a long time, but are you finished with the story?
- Travis shakes his head "no."
- Devon: Uh oh! [He did] a hook. And I did a hook!
- Mrs. S: Why do you think he might continue for a while before he comes to the ending of the story, Devon?
- Devon: He left us on a hook, and I did, too.
- Mrs. S: He's on Wednesday. So what do you think would be the next step?
- Travis: Thursday.
- Mrs. S: Are you going to have a surprise ending? Okay, I think that's very interesting. Well, you've combined two stories--*Cookie's Week* and Eve Merriam's book *Ducky*. (22/p.9) [Researcher note: *Ducky* is by Eve Bunting (1997).]

Both the teacher and Devon inserted strategy-related talk into the discussion of the story. The teacher recognized the borrowing of techniques from two stories Travis had been read, and Devon noticed the use of the popular "hook" children were applauded for using when they shared. Strategy-related talk was occasionally present in some of the read-aloud discussions (e.g., Mrs. Tyler asking, "How could we use a story like this to help us write stories?" after reading *Night Noises*, Fox, 1989; 10/p.7) but was a more predictable presence in the group-shared writing--probably because the group-shared writing event was the primary time for whole-group instruction in writing. Therefore, teachers would call attention to the strategies used by individual students in order to use in-context examples to teach strategies to the class. The teachers set an efferent stance by focusing children's attention on the strategies used by

classmates. The efferent stance then taken by the students (who were then preoccupied with strategy-related issues) limited the potential for students to engage in the story as a lived-through experience. This stance, when combined with the use of efferent questioning, may help explain the lack of critical or even affective responses to the stories. In turn, the lack of evidence of lived-through experiences indicates the possibility that children will learn to view reading as a largely efferent activity.

Asking author about process. Although it would have been impossible for students to ask the author questions during the read-alouds (since the author was not physically present during the reading), children often asked process-oriented questions during the question and comment period following the reading of a peer's group-shared writing. Most of the students' questions were variations of the "How did you get your idea?" question Graves (1995) has found frequently present in group-shared writing settings. A sampling of questions follows. All are directed at a peer writer.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Tiffany: | Um, how you made up this story? (17/p.3) |
| Sam: | How did you get the idea? (8/p.2) |
| Precious: | Why you leave us on the hook? (9/16) |
| Chris: | What made you think about [writing about] Mars? (10/p.2) |

The freedom to ask these kinds of questions gave children options not present as they responded to read-alouds. The physical presence of the author enabled the children to ask more probing questions, although the questions sampled above represent the most common kinds of questions. The teachers were more likely than students to ask complicated process questions as they talked with child-writers; students generally used the formulaic process questions to hold a conversational turn. I did not hear children ever later state that they developed an idea for a new piece in the same way someone else had, although the children often wrote stories based on the content (not process) of someone's else's writing. Since children's questions about process did not seem to indicate sincere interest in the writing strategy, they might suggest a desire to

(1) acquire a validated speaking turn or (2) feign interest in a classmates' story for some other social purpose.

Continuity of reading. In the group-shared writing event, children sometimes needed extensive help decoding their writing or read their work so softly that audibility became an issue. While older or more academically capable students' readings of their own stories were often like the teacher read-alouds, younger or less mature writers often needed considerable teacher help in telling their stories. Latresa, for instance, wanted to share a pumpkin patch piece she had written. The comments during her group-shared writing show the efforts of the *group* in framing, and even in telling, her story.

- Mrs.T: The little girl is going to the pumpkin patch to pick out a--
 Latresa: Punkin.
 Mrs.T: Pumpkin. What is it doing here?
 Latresa: Putting the punkin in.
 Mrs.T: They're putting the pumpkin in the car. Now what are they doing here? Where are they taking the pumpkin here?
 Sam: A house.
 Mrs.T: Carrying the pumpkin in the house. Good observation, Sam. Even Sam can read your story.
 Latresa: They puttin eyes and nose--
 Mrs.T: Oh, listen, what did she just say? They're putting the eyes and mouth and nose. (Latresa repeats with her.) So what is she making the pumpkin into?
 Child: A jack-o'-lantern.
 Mrs.T: Oh, you shouted out. Lisa, what are they making?
 Lisa: Jack-o'-lantern.
 Mrs.T: Jack-o'-lantern. (To Latresa) You finished?
 Latresa: They're taking it outside.
 Mrs.T: They're taking it outside, and what's inside your pumpkin?
 Latresa: A light--
 Mrs.T: And what's that pumpkin going to do? If Travis was here, he could tell us. He gave you the idea, didn't he? What he wrote yesterday gave you the idea.
 Latresa: (To Mrs.Tyler) Read that. (She's referring to part of the story in the journal--probably transcribed earlier by Mrs. Tyler.)

- Mrs.T: A girl and her mom went to a pumpkin patch. They picked it up and put it in the car, and they drove home. At home, they cut it. They put eyes, nose, and mouth. They put a light in it. They took it outside, and it said--
- Latresa: Boo.
- Mrs.T: Boo. Great. Thank you, Latresa. Pick someone who's a role model. Just raising their hands and not yelling out.
- Latresa: Karen.
- Mrs.T: No, someone who's raising their hands. Not talking. All right, I'll pick for you. (16/pp.1-2)

In this example, Latresa's short story was chopped up--read bit by bit. Because she needed the help of her teacher, she couldn't tell the story all by herself. The frequent intervention by Mrs. Tyler, however, made the story rather unlike a continuous read-aloud. Mrs. Tyler's techniques show how the teachers often used the group-shared writing time as a scaffolded reading instruction--helping the child to gradually do more independently. This excerpt also demonstrates the power of the teacher to determine speakers (e.g., the response of the child who shouted out is not validated). Finally, Latresa's move to call upon Karen--even though Karen was not volunteering to read--represents a trend in the group-shared writing episodes. The popular children were often chosen by classmates to offer questions or to share their stories, and this occurred so often that Melinda called out to Pat one day, "You *always* pick Karen!" (8/p.13). The discontinuous read-alouds occurred almost daily; that is, almost every day at least one child who needed decoding help or moral support shared during the group-shared writing time.

Some children read their stories so softly that their readings became discontinuous. Travis frequently read in a whisper-soft voice, and students would respond by asking him to read more clearly. I usually could not make out the things Travis said before the group, especially when he was reading. Lisa was vocal one day as Travis shared a piece he had written about a flying fish.

Travis is called up.

Travis: Flying fish cafish in the fish. . . . 'Morning' said the catfish. Go fish.
[I'm VERY unsure of the reading--but these words will give me clues in finding
this passage in his journal later.]

He's barely whispering.

Lisa: I can't hear.

(The intern re-reads the passage for him.) (12/p.8)

I often found Karen's group-shared writing hard to hear. In the margins beside my observations of Karen's reading of her "Paddle" story, I noted "I need to see this journal to see what all she was reading. It's way too fast and soft for me to type. Bring audiorecorder tomorrow." Beside my notes, Mrs. Smith, upon reviewing my comments, penciled in "I didn't hear this *or* read it. I can't ever hear Karen" (9/p.7). David complained of Kaley's reading, "Man, I can't hear [her]!" (8/p.2). By contrast, the teacher readers during read-alouds were always audible enough that I could hear them clearly from my place in the back of the room, and my audiorecorder always picked up their talk. Audibility and interruption issues were significant differences between read-alouds and group-shared writing. When I could not engage with a story, I surmised that it would have been similarly difficult for the participating children to step into a classmate's story.

Increased criticism of the reader. Since the reader was a child, listeners seemed more willing to criticize child-readers than teacher-readers. Although children did occasionally criticize the teachers, they did so less frequently than they did children, and when an outside adult reader came to read the children *Uncle Jed's Barbershop* (Mitchell, 1993), none of the children mentioned the fact that the reader forgot to show the children any of the illustrations the entire time he read the story. With peers, however, they were more free to air their criticisms. By critiquing the reader, however, I do not mean critiquing the *story*, which was given the same attention as real literature. In fact, many of the students' complaints about readers stem from their strong desire to both see and hear their classmates' stories. When Lisa

shared her baby squirrel story, David complained, "I can't see! I want to see the kitten--on the other page!" Lisa showed the picture, and then--moments later--David complained again, "I can't see. She did it too fast" (8/p.1). Chris complained of another of Lisa's stories, "I can't see!" (15/p.8) when she didn't show her illustrations quickly enough to suit him, and Lauren called out, "I didn't see!" (16/p.5) while Pat read her story about a unicorn. Mary (30/p.4) and Latresa (15/p.10) both appealed for better access to classmates' illustrations. David was easily the most vocal of the children in the class, stating, "That's not how you read it," (3/p.6) as Shade tried to read and "You need to hold it [the illustration] up" (34/p.9) while Pat shared a story. These kinds of interruptions accomplished the same kind of discontinuity caused by soft readings or teacher interruptions; they redirected students' attention at the reader rather than the story. I found that the comments made it hard for me to stay focused on the story world and instead directed me to attend to the reading techniques of the peer writer.

Summary. Other differences between group-shared writing and read-alouds included the teachers' efforts to connect the group-shared writing to the content of themes, the fact that children could read just part of a story in-progress whereas read-alouds were always of completed, published works, and that children had opportunities to reach out to peers during group-shared writing time by responding to a classmate's story or by choosing someone they liked to be the next to read or comment. Other differences described above include the issues of continuity of reading, a focus on writing strategies, and children's questioning about the author's writing process. However, these differences were not evident in every child's group-shared writing event, and the powerful similarities in how children responded to the two settings led me to include group-shared writing responses in my analysis. These differences do suggest that the teachers' established a highly efferent stance toward the readings of

group-shared writing--even more explicitly than they did during read-alouds. As a result, children's responses were mostly efferent, showing very little evidence of lived-through experiences even when there was evidence that children made personal connections or intertextual associations.

My preoccupation with children's modes of response led me to focus on the similarities in participant structures for the two settings, for the kinds of responses that were validated in the read-aloud setting were treated in parallel ways during the group-share of writing. Nonetheless, children were attending to much more than the story during group-shared writing time. They were also engaging in social negotiation to acquire a speaking turn (as they did during read-alouds), to call upon favorite students, or to demonstrate affinity with particular students by including those classmates in a story being shared. In many ways, participation in group-shared writing time--both as a writer and as an audience member--was part of a participation in a complex social network, and some children were able to use literacy to further their social goals or show their "places" within the social hierarchy of the classroom.

Comparisons of Three Typical Read-Alouds with One Differently-Structured Read-Aloud

During my study, I manipulated Mrs. Smith's instruction in one way; on two occasions, I asked her to pause after reading each page of two different stories I suggested.¹ I asked the teacher to read *The Story of Ruby Bridges* (Coles, 1995) and *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* (Miller, 1994). Both of these read-alouds took considerably longer than other, more typical read-alouds, and Mrs. Smith later

¹ I also asked the teacher to read another book (Grifalconi, 1993) in a similar fashion, but that reading was prematurely interrupted. The teacher had also asked students to hold their comments until the end of the story.

commented that the readings had run into her mathematics period. I would like to compare, in this section, what happened during one of these two read-alouds with what happened during three other typical read-alouds--the readings of *Ducky* (Bunting, 1997), *Always My Dad* (Wyeth, 1995), and *Borreguita and the Coyote* (Aardema, 1991). I chose these "typical" transcripts because of their relatively high proportion of student speaking turns, when compared to other transcripts. I sought the transcripts that would provide the best samples of student talk among the unmanipulated transcripts *and* which represented read-alouds that were uninterrupted. I made these choices to make comparisons to the manipulated read-aloud more fair. I chose to describe the Miller (1994) manipulated read-aloud since I have already presented much of the data from the Coles (1995) transcripts. Two of the books in this analysis (Miller and Wyeth) contain African American characters.

Typical Read-Alouds

First, I will discuss my findings from the typical read-alouds. The transcripts showed a total of 292 speaking turns, 139 (or 48%) of which were teacher-turns. Teacher turns included turns taken to read the book. Of the remaining 133 speaking turns taken by individual children, African American children spoke during 34% (45) of those turns; White children acquired the other 66% (88) of the turns. (Twenty speaking turns were group-responses.) African American children verbally participated approximately half as often as their White counterparts, but they represented 42% of the class in attendance during the reading of these three stories.

Among these transcripts, I observed children demonstrating the following kinds of response. Children offered fill-in-the-blank comments, responses to efferent teacher questions, personal connections, evaluative comments, various kinds of literary

analysis comments, and remarks that indicated a lived-through experience. I will explore each of these response types.

First, the most frequent single kind of response was the fill-in-the-blank response. Approximately half of the students' turns during the *Always My Dad* transcript were fill-in-the-blank responses. Mrs. Tyler used the cloze-like technique often with the children.

- Mrs.T: (reading) One day last summer, my mom took me and my three brothers to the country to stay with Grandma and Grandpa. They live on a farm and they're my dad's (pause)--
- Children: (hesitant pause)
- Mrs.T: Mom and--
- Children: Dad.
- Devon: Cows.
- Mrs. T: Dad. After my mom left us to drive back to the city, I looked around everywhere--in the barn, in the garden, even in the henhouse. In the barn I saw Grandpa--
- Karen: Milking the cow.
- Mrs.T: Milking Brownie. And my favorite horse, Sir Imp, was munching on some-- (pause)
- Children: Grass.
- Mrs.T: Hay. Chris, come join us. When I opened the door to the henhouse, two big hens got out. Grandpa had to run to catch them before they dug up the flowers. What I was really hoping to see--who was I *really* hoping to see?
- Children: My dad.
- Mrs.T: My dad. I thought maybe he had come to the farm, too, and was planning to--
- Few Children: See me.
- Mrs.T: Surprise us. But Daddy wasn't there. (page) During the day, Gary, Brian, Kevin and I would play--
- Children (especially. Latresa): Hide and go seek.
- ...
- Mrs.T: Yeah, hide and go seek, and statues. (pause) We helped Grandpa weed the vegetable garden, and Grandma pick blackberries in the woods at the edge of the field. "Mind you don't pull up a carrot," Grandpa warned. "I reckon you little rascals eat more berries than you pick," Grandma teased, smiling. (pause) When evening came, we'd listen to peepers on

the front porch while we ate our dessert, blackberry cobbler with--

Mark: Ice cream!

Mary: MMMM.

Mrs.T: Ice cream! Sooo peaceful. Grandma would always say, "Just look at that sky." Sometimes there was a--

Children (few): Moon.

Mary: Of course, there's a full moon. (39/pp.1-2)

A moderate use of the fill-in-the-blank was evident in the reading of *Ducky*, which was also read by Mrs. Tyler. I noted no use of the technique when Mrs. Smith read

Borreguita and the Coyote.

Children also responded to teachers' efferent questions. Teachers tended to use efferent questions to ask children to recall information that had been given during the read-aloud (e.g., Mrs. Smith mentioned that *Borreguita* was "A tale from Mexico" and then later said, "And this takes place on a farm. In what country?" to which Pat responded, "Mexico," 26/p.1) or to teach story structure. Mrs. Tyler, during the reading of *Ducky*, prompted students to see the connections between the parts of the story.

Mrs.T: All right, there's something. I'm going to ask you a question. We were talking about the beginning, middle, and end.

Leon: Ooh, oooh, oh. It's like, in the middle, he tries to solve his problems.

Mrs.T: Great. The middle is solving a problem. Well, let's talk about the beginning. Who can tell me what happened at the beginning of the *Ducky* book? What happened? What was the problem that happened at the beginning. . . . Travis?

Travis: They fell into the ocean. (He's using a soft voice.)

Mrs.T: They were rolling down the hill? Off the ship? And what happened?

Travis: And they fell in the ocean.

Mrs.T: So the crate fell off the ship into the ocean. (Mrs. T. writes it onto the chart paper.) (21/p.10)

Later in the same transcript, Mrs. Tyler asked what happened when the story's protagonist found the toy ducky. Billy answered, "He took him to school" (21/p.11).

These examples from the transcripts suggest the kinds of recall-based, efferent questions the teachers often asked during read-aloud.

Children made personal connections with the content of the stories. During the reading of *Ducky*, Mrs. Tyler mentioned that she would show them a rubber ducky. "If someone has a rubber ducky," she stated, "I think they could bring it in and show Chris for share time." Lauren offered that she "used to have one" (21/p.9). Later in the transcript, Chris remarks, "I can make the sound of a duck." Mrs. Tyler replies, "I know. Is that appropriate for right now?" Latresa, listening in, says, "No!" (21/p.11). I found fewer personal connections in these transcripts than I would have liked. In fact, the *Ducky* transcript was the only one of the three that contained evidence of children's personal connections.

Children were able to provide their own personal evaluations of the story or of particular elements within the story. They did so with enthusiasm, and their comments were evident in the *Always My Dad* and *Ducky* transcripts. Examples of children's evaluative comments follow.

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Billy: | I liked the part when he's talking with his friends. (21/p.9) |
| Tyler: | I like when he ate it and spit it out. (21/p.9) |
| Tiffany: | [I liked] when he was in the bathtub (21/p.10) |
| Melinda: | I liked the part when he shark popped it out. (21/p.10) |
| Lisa: | I like that the girl gets to see her dad. (39/p.12) |
| Sam: | I liked the part with the hug . . . and I like the candlefly.
(39/p.13) |
| Mark: | I like the jobs. (39/p.13) |
| Latresa: | (She opens the book to the page with the dad hugging the girl.)
I like this girl. (39/p.13) |

It seems important to note that all of the evaluative comments were preceded by Mrs. Tyler's explicit invitation to speak. She invited either "a comment about" the book (21/p.9) or asked the children, "Did you like this story? What did you like about it?" (39/p.12). Children did not seem inclined, during these readings, to initiate discussion

on their favorite parts but responded enthusiastically to the teachers' invitations to do so.

The children also began speaking of the stories in ways that I consider analytical or literary-focused. Although these kinds of comments were rare in the *Always My Dad* transcript, they surfaced more often during the other two readings. I noticed students addressing illustrations, story content, and text.

Student talking about the illustration commented on their insights into patterns evident in the pictures. Chris remarked that one of the *Ducky* illustrations followed the pattern of "down, up, down, up, down, up" (21/p.7), and Devon later tried to put into words the meaning he was making from the illustrations. "I know that the duck went through the waves from the, from the, like that, and he was going around like a ball" (21/p.10). Children also mentioned their discoveries based on seeing the illustrations.

Sam: I know where he is. (21/p.7)

Billy and David: It's the moon! (26/p.16)

Billy: She'll far away (26/p.16)

Devon: Right there; Coyote is small. (26/p.16)

Billy: It's the shadow! It's the shadow of the water! . . . I think I see something [in the illustrations]. A squirrel. No, a little ol' mouse. (26/p.17)

Students also commented on the content of stories. Both Lauren and Leon hypothesized about the material out of which *Ducky* was made (21/p.7), and Devon remarked that the lonely part of *Ducky's* experience was "sad" (21/p.8). Leon and Sam also wondered aloud about the connection between this story and a real-life experience in which a crate of bath toys was lost. "How is that true?" asked Sam. After Mrs. Tyler's explanation, Leon added, "That happened? . . . That's why it's true?" (21/p.9). Although they did not use the word "genre," the children were trying to make sense of a fictional story in which a duck talks and has feelings with the non-

fiction story (on which it was based) in which a real crate of toys was lost. Leon and Devon also wondered aloud about how the duck would survive.

Devon: Look, he's gonna be lost.
 Mrs. T: But does he sink?
 Leon: No. He floats; he's rubber. (21/p.9)

While listening to the *Borreguita* story, the children vocalized their understandings about how the lamb, in order to save her life, was playing tricks on the coyote. Again, Devon wondered about where the plot would go. "The sheep is gonna get in trouble," he hypothesized (26/p.15). After the lamb in the story convinced the coyote that a large, white image was a hunk of cheese, the coyote dove into it and came out "coughing and sputtering, and he turned for shore." Billy explained--in case anyone misunderstood what had happened--"Cause that was the moon" (26/p.16), meaning the image of the moon reflected in the water at night. At another point in the story, Mrs. Smith asked why the coyote in the story, when he tired of holding up the rock the lamb had left him to support, covered his head with his paw. Sam responded, "He thought it would really come down" (26/p.17).

Finally, on two occasions, children responded to the words used in the text. During the reading of *Ducky*, Leon observed that the words in the story made a pattern. Mrs. Tyler read, "High up on the sea swell, I see a spread across the ocean for miles and miles and miles," to which Leon responded, "That's like a pattern, too! Miles and miles and miles!" (21/p.7). After Mrs. Smith read the words the Coyote tells *Borreguita*, "When you are fat, I shall come back," Billy observed, "When you are fat, I shall come back. That's rhyming!" (26/p.15).

The children also occasionally showed evidence of a lived-through experience. I called this "stepping into story" as I categorized the responses. I found evidence of this kind of engagement in all three transcripts. Responding to *Always My Dad*, Leon

chanted, along with the main character in the story, "Daddy, Daddy" (39/p.2), calling her father along with her. Sam also commented, "It's Dad" (39/p.2), as if he were familiar with this father. Mary responded to the presence of ice cream with, "MMMM," as if she could taste the flavor the children were eating. During *Ducky*, Leon interrupted Mrs. Tyler's explanation about the crate of bathtub toys leaving from Hong Kong, China, to exclaim, "That is Whoooah!" (21/p.9). Devon showed concern for the lamb in *Borreguita* when she first encountered the coyote, sighing, "uh-oh" (26/p.15) when he heard of the coyote's presence. Other children showed their concern for the wise lamb when the coyote threatened her.

[Mrs. Smith is reading. Note: She has changed the name of *Borreguita* to *Borreguito*.]

Mrs. S: When the coyote found her, he growled. Rrrrr. "Borreguito," he said.

"I see you under there, and I'm going to pull you out and eat you."

Borreguito went, "Baaaa, baaaa." (Pause)

Leon: Oooooohhhh. (like he's scared)

Mrs. S: "Senior Coyote, you can't eat me now. I have to hold up this mountain. If I let go, it will come tumbling down." The coyote looked at that mountain, and he saw that the lamb was holding it up.

Tyler: Holy cow!

Billy: (talking to the coyote) It's the shadow! It's the shadow of the water! (26/p.17)

Billy and the other children were, for the moment, standing by that mountain with the lamb and the coyote--mesmerized by what would happen next. I had expected to find many, many instances of these kinds of comments in all my transcripts. Their minor presence in the discussions with the most student-talk, however, leads me to believe they would have been more common if children's during-story talk had been more permissible and if the teachers had been granted more read-aloud time in their schedules.

Differently-Structured Read-Alouds

Knowing the kinds of teacher constraints that were restricting teachers' practice, I wanted to learn how children's responses might have been different if the teachers had been able to spend more time on stories. Therefore, I asked Mrs. Smith to read two different stories to the students, *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* (Miller, 1994) and *The Story of Ruby Bridges* (Coles, 1995). During these readings, I asked if she would pause at the end of each page, allowing students' comments during the read-aloud instead of asking children to hold their comments. Although I did not ask her to modify her usual practice of allowing comments only after teacher recognition to speak, she intuitively allowed children to talk through their thoughts as they emerged--rather than forcing students to comply with the usual participant structure of read-aloud. Although I realize that these two days' readings robbed Mrs. Smith and her students of time that would have been spent on other subjects, I found that read-alouds without the pressure of the clock fostered a deeper level of student talk than was ever possible during the "typical" read-alouds. I suspect these transcripts represent the way Mrs. Smith would always teach, if given enough literature time in her classroom. In this section, I will analyze one of those transcripts for comparison to the "typical" read-alouds.

The transcript used for analysis in this section is a transcript from the reading of *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* (Miller, 1994). For the differently-structured read-aloud, I observed 198 conversational turns. Of these, 100 were teacher turns. Of the remaining 98 turns, the responses were spread evenly between African American students (50% of student turns) and White students (50% of student turns). The number of speaking turns represents an increase from the responses evident in the "typical" read-alouds. What I find more interesting, however, is that the

African American children were only 39% of the class during this particular read-aloud.

Throughout this transcript, children were making personal connections with the story, asking questions, engaging in evaluation and analysis, and talking about the theme of the story. Some of these responses begin to approach what I had been seeking throughout this study--critical response. A factor that might have encouraged students' critical responses is the story content. A theme of the story is that the child, a young version of the writer Zora Neale Hurston, can do whatever she likes. Two sources of tension are present in the story. First, against the wishes of her father, the girl wants to and does engage in activities that are traditionally male-oriented. Second, the little girl's mother--the source of her inspiration and drive--dies during the story.

Early in the reading, Mrs. Smith began by asking some questions. First, she asked students to make predictions about the story based on the cover illustration. The following predictions about the story were prompted by Mrs. Smith's questions.

Mrs.S: This book is *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree*. And Zora Hurston is a black female author, and I've read a number of her books I've enjoyed. And I think this book might not be about her as a grown up. What do you think?

Leon: She's a little girl.

Mrs.S: And this says "And the Chinaberry Tree." This was written about her by a man named William Miller, and it was illustrated by two people. We don't see that very often--that two people worked on the illustrations--but in this case, that's exactly what happened. What do you think she might be doing by that tree?

Travis: Sittin' by it.

Lisa: Talking to it. (41/p.1)

This was about as much direction as Mrs. Smith gave during the read-aloud. For the rest of the transcript, most of her part in moving the discussion is far less explicit. She asked open-ended questions and even found that some of her ideas were ignored in

favor of students' interests (e.g., when she asked a question and students' responses were directed at something else). I have pulled out seven ways children responded during this read-aloud. They include making intertextual connections, predicting, analyzing language and theme, evaluating parts within the story (such as character), and making personal connections with the story.

Intertextual connections. Lisa made a teacher-prompted connection when Mrs. Smith reminded her that one of Lisa's favorite books also contained a tree.

Lisa: Yes, *The Giving Tree*.

Mrs.S: And I bet this tree might be important to her in the same way that the Giving Tree was important.

Lisa: Wait, Mrs. Smith. Let me see the back. (Lisa stands up and looks at the back flap of the book. She was looking for Shel Silverstein's name--the author of *The Giving Tree*, 1964.) (41/p.1)

Billy's connections were not directly elicited by the teacher. Billy's main intertextual connection was between the story and the Bible. Several times during this transcript, he referred to the Bible. All of his connections were verbalized after Mrs. Smith read the page on which the father tells Zora to read the Bible every day. The illustration shows the father sitting at a table, reading his Bible and drinking coffee. Billy protested the father's contention that girls should wear dresses and abandon tree-climbing. Billy explained, "The Bible, it's about she can go fishin' and to the city" (41/p.3). He claimed that the mother's suggestion that the world belonged to Zora was "right" and that "If God not would have tookeen from the the devil, then (?inaudible?) she say, 'This country must be free'" (41/p.3). Billy used the voice of a preacher and raised his hand frequently during the rest of the transcript to try to acquire a speaking turn. At one point, he burst into spontaneous preaching, calling out, "Jesus can come before God, 'cause you can't go *over* to get to God, and you can't go *under* to get to God. You got to go straight through Jesus to get to God" (41/p.4). An interesting thread in the discussion is how he tried to acquire more

speaking turns. Enthusiastic, he said, "I got a new question," and Mrs. Smith told him to "hang on a minute." Shortly thereafter, she returned to him so he could share. Later, he told her, "I got another question." He repeated his question comment three times. She put him off, briefly, even though he had his hand up to speak. His candid talk about religion and his explicit challenging of the father's values (e.g., "Her father wrong; she right," 41/p.4) probably led her to be careful about how much of the talking time he used.

Predictions. Children also made predictions about the story. Billy made an unsolicited prediction after Mrs. Smith read a page from the book.

Mrs.S: (reading) But only men fished in the lake, only men traveled to the cities. Zora watched with envy as the wagons rattled down the dusty roads. (She repeats) Only men.

Billy: She gonna be fishin'. (41/p.2)

Billy later predicted that "When she get fishin', her father gonna like her" (41/p.5).

Evaluations. Lisa, Billy, and Pat made evaluative comments about the father's attitude and the issue of the daughter not being able to participate in boys' activities. After hearing that Zora would not be allowed to fish, Pat said, "That's not fair" (41/p.2). Later, Billy said, "He's mean," and Lisa added, "That's bossing her around. . . . Her mother's nice, but her father's really mean" (41/p.3). Latresa's opinion of the father was influenced by her perceptions from the illustrations; "He got a mean face," she explained (41/p.3). Each of these comments followed another student's comment or a pause in the reading.

Literary analysis and theme. Students' literary analysis and theme connections appeared intertwined. Making sense of some of the image-filled language required students to come to terms with the story's themes. Much of the students' theme- or language-related talk was initially prompted by the teacher. For instance, Mrs. Smith asked, "What do you think the mother is telling her when she says that everything has

a voice and 'The world belongs to you?'" Pat responded, "That it's a free country, and she could do anything that the boys could do. . . . She could climb trees" (41/p.3). Lisa added, in an effort to explain the concepts of the world belonging to the girl and that everything had "voice," "Since you're nature; everything's nature, and it looks different. But it sounds, you know, how ducks go quack and [cows go] moo?" (41/p.4).

Later, Mrs. Smith asked, "What do you think about a story being a good way to remember things?"

- Pat: Well, when you read stories, some stories are true. Well, it keeps them alive, because you tell true stories and you learn them and it's like true. And it's like about other people.
- Mrs.S: And when you hear a story--
- Pat: And it's about real life.
- Mrs.S: And what do you do when you hear a story sometimes? You might share it with somebody, too. Mary?
- Mary: A story keeps it alive because if you are playing a game and know like a story, you tell somebody, and if there wasn't any story, then there couldn't be any story. (41/p.6)

In a classroom ruled by the clock, one might not have found time for these musings as children made meaning. Near the end of the story, Mrs. Smith asked students to consider another line from the book. "'Climb to the top.' Did her mom just mean to climb trees?" The class responded with a "no," and she went on. Travis expanded on a nonparticipant's contribution.

- Travis: Climb so fast she could see anything.
- Mrs.S: And the things she saw out there in the world, what did her mother tell her about them?
- Travis: You could go anywhere. (41/p.8)

The theme of justice seemed to permeate the discussion. Pat mentioned, at one point, "You know that some men say that women aren't allowed to drink beer, and some girls think that they aren't allowed to drink wine" (41/p.5) Much of what students

responded to in the story, even when literary in nature, connected with the story's theme.

Personal connections. Students also made personal connections with the stories. Often, Mrs. Smith prompted students to make these connections. She also found herself in interesting pedagogical territory as she asked children to think about issues of justice. For instance, she asked, "I wonder if any of you have wanted to do something that just men do. Is there anything that men get to do that others say, 'You're too little,' or 'You're a girl'?" Mark mentioned wanting to "look at all the stuff in [his] dad's safe," and a nonparticipant suggested that driving a car fit into the category of prohibited activities on the basis of age. Latresa suggested riding "a bike and roller blading." Lisa, however, gave a lengthy personal example.

Lisa: I have two things to say. One is, um, just that people are born differently, and there is something else I want to say. That one time, my grandmother, when she was a girl, she wanted to paint and do ballet. And my brother, Steve, wants to go and do girl things. And my mom says, "No, you can't go 'cause it's a *girl* thing." (She portrays herself talking back to her mother.) "But, Mom, why?!"

Mrs. S: Did you agree with that?

Lisa: I think Steve could go. (41/p.5)

Other examples were less personal. Latresa reminded folks that among the warnings about activities to avoid was the "Don't do drugs!" (41/p.5) slogan, and Leon demonstrated what he knew about how "the wind talks" and blew to show what he meant. One lengthy excerpt from the transcript involved children sharing stories from their own lives. In an effort to help make less abstract the notion of keeping stories "alive," Mrs. Smith invited children to share stories from their own lives.

[I recorded only the first few minutes of this exchange; the teacher and students talked at length on this topic.]

Mrs. S: If you ever heard a story about yourself when you were a baby, raise your hand. (no hands) Nobody ever told you about when you were a baby, how you learned to walk?

- Latresa: My mamma.
 (Volunteers' hands go up: Karen, Lisa, Pat, Lauren, Billy, Latresa, and Mary)
 Mrs.S: What did your mamma tell you?
 Latresa: She told me, "You was a little baby, you used to smile every day."
 Mrs.S: You smiled every day? Well, you still smile a lot. Karen, tell me something your mamma told you.
 Karen: When I was a baby, I just came out. I didn't cry, but when Stephanie came out, she cried and cried and wouldn't stop crying until she was little.
 Mrs.S: See, moms talk about these things. Travis?
 Travis: When my brother came out, he cry all the time. But when I came out, I never cried. (41/p.6)

As the children continued to share their stories about learning to walk and playing with food and being silly, they learned about the idea of keeping a story "alive"--an issue which came up as children discussed the story's language, but they also were being exposed to the genre of storytelling. Mrs. Smith also allowed children to make sense out of cultural rituals by permitting children to share their memories of death rituals. The excerpt, included earlier in this chapter, of children discussing how they and their families moved furniture, took flowers, and cried after the death of a loved one helped the children understand the foreign rituals--portrayed in the story--of clock stopping and mirror-draping. As children showed comfort sharing their stories, they participated in keeping stories alive, but they also were learning that the teacher valued the connections they made between literature and their own lives.

In addition to the categories of response included in this discussion, children also responded to illustrations, by touching the books, and by answering the few efferent / recall-based questions the teacher asked. Remarkably, children who were excluded from validated talk within the participation structure of the more typical read-alouds could participate in--and even lead--this discussion. Better, the levels of talk encouraged in this discussion fostered deeper levels of engagement than were evident in the typical read-alouds. As children began sharing their personal stories and

wrestling with image-filled language, they managed to deal with theme--questioning the ways of seeing the world asserted by the father character but also by "characters" in their own lives.

African American Children's Reactions to Stories with African American Characters

When I was present in the classroom, the teachers read nine African American stories (or, at least, stories with African American characters) to the children. These nine stories represented approximately one-fifth of all books ($n = 44$) read aloud by the classroom teachers in my presence. Reading literature on the thematic units (e.g., farming, the Great Lakes) seemed to decrease the teachers' opportunities to read literature representing African American characters. Since the teachers had limited time for read-alouds, they felt compelled to read stories related to the theme before reading other kinds of literature. Most of the African American literature that was read was shared during African American Read-In Week--during which time putting the theme on hold seemed permissible--or during the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday.

I have eliminated from my sampling the first story, *More Than Anything Else* (Bradby, 1995), because I did not have audiorecording support at that time, and the teacher's recollections of some parts of that read-aloud differed from mine. I have also eliminated *Meet Danitra Brown* (Grimes, 1994) since that read-aloud was cut short prematurely because of scheduling problems. That left seven stories: *Kinda Blue* (Grifalconi, 1993), *Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King* (Morzollo, 1993), *Always My Dad* (Wyeth, 1995), *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* (Miller, 1994), "Catskinella" (Hamilton, 1995), *The Story of Ruby Bridges* (Coles, 1995), and *The Faithful Friend* (SanSouci, 1995). In this section, I will briefly discuss my observations of African American students' reactions to these stories.

First, the children in this classroom rarely initiated talk about race or ethnicity. When the teacher read a story aloud, I noticed an absence of student talk about the race of the characters. One exception was Precious' exclaimed observation regarding the characters in *The Faithful Friend*, "It's a white boy and a black boy!" (44/p.3). In two of the other stories, race was a central issue. In both *Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King* and *The Story of Ruby Bridges*, the stories were true stories dealing directly with race and discrimination. The African American children were already familiar with Martin Luther King, Jr. and his dream before the reading of Morzollo's book. They seemed neither surprised nor disturbed by the discrimination noted in the story, but many of their White classmates found the book troubling. A nonparticipant was surprised that Blacks and Whites had once used separate water fountains. Just like in the reading of Coles' book, the children promoted a view of discrimination as a phenomenon of the distant past. When Mrs. Tyler used a fill-in-the-blank technique to identify the role of Rosa Parks in the Civil Rights movement, she said, "Rosa Parks and other people helped to change [the law]. Now people can sit--" to which the children responded as a group, "anywhere" (37/p.3). Both Latresa, Leon, and Billy demonstrated prior knowledge about the story of Martin Luther King, Jr. and enthusiastically volunteered it into the discussion. Latresa volunteered information on children not being permitted to attend the same schools, and Leon and Billy knew about the shooting of Martin Luther King, Jr. "Somebody shot him. They wanted to do bad things," explained Leon. "It was a White man!" Billy exclaimed. Almost all of the African American children (and some of the White children) present in the class the day Coles' book was read had seen the television special about Ruby's entry into an all-white school.

In examining how children responded to these stories, I wondered through which perspectives children were seeing the tales. In the Coles' transcript, Precious

clearly put herself into the shoes of someone who might be deprived of the right to read when she reflected on African Americans' historical struggle for literacy, "I wouldn't want to be dumb" (43/p.5), whereas Lauren asserted that "Black people are people, too" (43/p.5). Lisa, too, spoke through the perceptions of a White child when she hypothesized that the crowds outside Ruby's school were violent "Because they thought the Black people weren't safe" (43/p.4). Travis, though, expanded on the content of the story, adding information not in the text, when he mentioned, "They be tellin' her, 'Go back to Africa' and stuff like that" (43/p.4). His insider knowledge helped him frame his reading of the story. Precious' comments about the systematic deprivation of slaves' right to read suggest her awareness of racism as perpetuated by *groups* rather than as isolated acts of discrimination by *individuals*. I read between the lines of the White children's comments a sense that only bad people would be racist and that most of those bad people died out with slavery and school segregation.

I did not observe explicit talk about race in the other stories the teachers read to the children. Most of the other books' stories focused on issues *other* than race. For instance, *Kinda Blue* is the story of a child coming to terms with her own moodiness and learning to value difference. *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* addresses gender bias and striving to achieve big goals. The absence of children's verbalized recognition of difference in the stories is consistent with my observations at other times of day. Although issues of race and ethnicity were present, daily--hourly--in their lives, children simply did not talk about them. In my talks with students, they did not mention race or ethnicity unless I initiated talk on the topic. As teachers read stories dealing explicitly with race, children were given an avenue for socially-acceptable talk about the issues.

Finally, I wondered if children became more "engaged" in stories with African American characters. Although I perceived African American students to be more

vocal and confident in the discussions of books with African American characters, the limited number of African American read-alouds I witnessed in the classroom leads me to be cautious making any generalizations. First, three of the seven read-alouds I am able to include in this analysis were manipulated in some way. I asked Mrs. Smith to adapt her reading style for *Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree* and *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. I used similar techniques in my reading of *Kinda Blue*. Therefore, I do not have enough data on which to make any strong assertions about the influence of characters on African American involvement in story discussions. I will, however, make the tentative claim that increasing children's time for and access to speaking turns will enhance the likelihood of African American children's participation in story discussions, as I saw increases occur in both the Marzollo and Coles story transcripts.

Summary

In this chapter, I identified some of the most frequent kinds of response I observed in the whole group setting. I discussed both the frequency of specific categories of response and indicated differences in racial groups' participation in each of the kinds of response, when evident. The findings suggested that African American children were more likely to engage in physical response movement than their White counterparts and were also more likely to engage in other, highly social unrelated-to-reading movement behaviors. The findings also suggested that African American students more frequently used immediate "calling out" as one of their modes of response, even when the content of their responses (as evidenced in other response categories dealing with response content) were not substantially different in nature from the responses of the White students in the class.

I also compared the read-aloud and group-shared writing experiences to identify similarities and differences between the two reading events. I found that the

participant structures and reverence for the literature were similar for the two events but that some group-shared writing was discontinuous. Teachers established an efferent stance during group-shared writing time, focusing on writing strategies and processes rather on the content of the stories. I have suggested that this stance may have been adopted since group-shared writing time was the teachers' primary time of day for writing instruction. Students' lack of aesthetic response may have resulted from the teachers' stance and the distractions of discontinuous read-alouds of group-shared writing.

In my examination of three typical read-alouds and one differently-structured read-aloud, I suggested that students' lack of deep, analytical responses may have been due to the teachers' pressure to hurry through read-alouds. When teachers allowed students to verbalize responses during the read-aloud and allowed students to follow discussion leads, children engaged in much more critical and theme-related response, *and* more African American children contributed to the discussions.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This study was designed to explore possible relationships between children's responses to read-alouds and group-shared writing and children's ethnicities. I entered the study with a particular interest in the experiences of African American students, so I examined their experiences most closely. If schools are where a number of children from different cultural backgrounds first come together, it should not be surprising that children often enter schools with very different understandings of how to participate in group communication events. They also enter with different background experiences to inform their understandings as they respond to read-alouds and classmates' group-shared writing. Researchers have indicated that school culture does not always match nicely with students' cultural backgrounds, leading children to participate in ways consistent with their backgrounds but inconsistent with the expectations of teachers (e.g., Delpit, 1988; Heath, 1983; Philips, 1983). The mismatch between students and teachers occurs even in the classrooms of teachers who consciously try to attend to issues of race and ethnicity (Gallas, 1997; Kickbush, 1987; McDiarmid & Price, 1990; Sleeter, 1992).

In the current study, children's ethnic backgrounds helped shape the ways children participated in whole-group literacy "events" (Bloome & Bailey, 1992, p.182). By examining response from the perspective of the event, I was able to see the social forces at work in shaping students' responses. Although I could have examined response from a psychological perspective, I preferred to use a social theory of response to contextualize response and see how responses trickled into other parts of

classroom life--particularly social relationships between children. In this study, ethnicity appeared to influence some African American children's preferred modes of response to read-alouds and group-shared writing. African American children's ethnic backgrounds influenced their classroom behaviors (including demonstrations of response) in ways that either supported their move into interracial peer groups or discouraged White classmates from including them in their play and talk. Exhibiting ethnically appropriate responses that were inconsistent with the "teacher's dictates and criteria" (Beach, 1993, p.109) increased children's likelihood of being marginalized (i.e., being reminded to use appropriate rules, having names put on a list of rule-breakers, or being excluded from recess). These consequences, in turn, seemed to validate White children's perceptions of certain other students as troublemakers and made futile the efforts of the "inappropriately" responding child who wanted to join the White peer group. The result, I think, is for some students a cycle of exhibiting engagement with story, being reprimanded for it in some way, being labeled by other classmates, and later finding that ethnically linked behaviors and responses bar them from full inclusion in the classroom community.

This was not the pattern for all African American students. Some students, such as Latresa and Tiffany, demonstrated few efforts to join the White girls' peer group, so I could not fully evaluate the effect of the ceiling their behaviors put on their efforts to join another peer group even though their responses were similar to Precious'. Leon's responses and other behavior patterns fit well with both the teachers' and classmates' expectations for appropriateness; his responses did not disadvantage him in the social world of the classroom. Precious, however, continued to try to move into the White girls' group, and her ethnically influenced strategies for classroom interaction (i.e., calling out, moving around, touching things she liked) did not fit easily into the traditional "institutional style" (Hilliard, 1992, p.394) of school or with

the powerful White girls' ideas of appropriate behavior. I will summarize this phenomenon more fully in the following section.

Summary of the Results

I compared the responses of two academically successful, African American students, Leon and Precious, to examine how they differed in their responses to read-aloud and group-shared writing. I discovered that Precious and her family subscribed to an ethnic identity that was different from Leon's and that her responses--immediate, passionate, and unconventional--did not always fit the prescribed rules of read-aloud and group-shared writing time participation. Her responses appeared to be, however, consistent with her experiences as member of the ethnic group with whom she seemed to identify. She called out her spontaneous responses, moved to see books better, and sometimes took books or journals from others in order to read them. Her ethnicity also influenced her "place" in the social network of the classroom. Despite her academic association with White girls, she was not allowed to join their social group. As a result, Precious often wrote literature-related stories modeled after and in response to the White girls' patterns. Perhaps the saddest part of evaluating her written response was that she perceived the White girls to be her friends, despite their unwillingness to voluntarily associate with her.

Leon represents a social opposite of Precious. Since Leon was accepted into any peer group in the class, his written responses reflect the complexity of response that he was academically capable of putting on paper at the time and do not represent a following of any specific class trends. Instead, he borrowed techniques and topics he liked from a range of classmates' writing and from books his teacher read. His responses to literature in the whole-group setting fit well with the expectations of his teacher and the intern. He learned quickly and with little prompting how to raise his

hand, wait for acknowledgment before speaking, and to stay seated and still during read-aloud and group-shared writing time. His effectiveness at accessing speaking turns may indicate why he verbalized his response more frequently than Precious did in the whole group setting.

In the small group setting, both children responded to the stories with African American characters. Both children made personal connections with the stories, stepped into the stories (e.g., speaking for a character), expressed reactions to the stories, and asked questions. Leon's small-group responses were similar to his read-aloud and group-shared writing responses, but Precious' small-group responses were more prominent than they had been in read-aloud and group-shared writing--probably because of her increased permission, in the smaller group, to express her wonderings and comments immediately. She was discouraged, in class, from calling out her thoughts and reactions. The teachers' frequent use of efferent questions and fill-in-the-blank prompts in large group discussions also limited the speaking opportunities of children who did not participate well in the rituals of accessing speaking turns.

Both children had literate families who encouraged reading. Precious, however, had been socialized in her neighborhood community with an illiterate father for most of her childhood years. Her mother's return fostered her success at academic tasks, but she still struggled to fit into the culture of school. Even when her responses suggested engagement with stories, they were still likely to be delivered in unconventional ways. Her experiences reflect a strong mismatch between response modes valued in school and response modes consistent with her cultural background. Leon's family had modeled for him, since his first years, the value of reading and frequently read together as a family. Thus, Leon learned, at home, much about the kinds of cultural knowledge he would be expected to exhibit in school. His mother's deliberate efforts to insulate him from the culture of his neighborhood also encouraged

him to be more highly immersed in the cultural values she wanted him to internalize. Leon was also at a social advantage simply by virtue of his gender. The boys were less racially-exclusive in their play than were the girls.

As I compared my findings to those of Clark (1983), who studied the family lives of high- and low-achieving Black students, I found parallels between the home environments of his high-achievers and the homes of Precious and Leon. Clark describes how the families of high-achievers in his study limited their children's "contact with potentially negative or 'bad' community influences" (p.62), kept most of the child's activities within the home, and resisted children's appeals to "hang out" (p.89). Precious and Leon's mothers both described their perceptions of their neighborhoods as in some way threatening the successful socialization of their children, although Leon's mother--by virtue of her ability to have a parent home at all times--was better able than Precious' mother to carry out her stated commitments. The successful children in Clark's study were part of secure families that had rituals and permitted free expression between the adults and children. Precious' and Leon's mothers' comments reflected a similar philosophy. As I reflect on the meaning of a truly pluralistic democracy, I wonder what it means that ethnic minority parents, in order to foster the academic achievement of their children, often choose to shelter their children from the rich cultures of their neighborhoods.

A related finding of this study is that complicated issues of race are present in classrooms that appear, on the surface, to be well-integrated. Although other research on young children's social patterns suggests that racism or biases based on ethnicity are not as prevalent among young children as they are older children (Holmes, 1995), the current study seems to indicate that problems exist even among kindergartners. Despite children's willingness to complete activities in interracial groups when the teacher determined seating and partnerships, they immediately re-segregated upon

entering a free choice situation (e.g., choosing their own seats at lunch time; finding recess playmates; picking worktime partners). At times, the exclusive nature of ethnically influenced peer groups caused painful consequences for children not allowed to join a group, for the marginalized child (in this case, Precious) sometimes continued to perceive the more popular children as friends—even when the feelings were not reciprocal.

The current study unfortunately complicates issues of race and ethnicity with the issue of social class; all the ethnic minority children were also poor. If children are, as researchers suggest, in the process of identity development throughout their schooling (Aboud, 1988; Banks, 1988; Davidson, Yu, & Phelan, 1993; Hewitt, 1994), their social experiences with other children are likely to influence their developing senses of who they are—ethnically, academically, and socially. Therefore, if ethnicity influences the modes of response used by a child, the child's self-esteem could be influenced by how the members of the classroom community receive those responses. Self-esteem is developed as we evaluate how others perceive our performance, as we weight the significance of others' evaluations, and how we measure our own performances against those of others (Hewitt, 1994, p. 123). If a child's responses are perceived negatively by others of importance (for instance, a teacher the child adores or a peer whose friendship the child wants), then the consequence can eventually be decreased self-esteem.

The White girls' exclusive group was not conscious of the discriminatory behaviors they directed toward the African American girls, or at least, if they were, they never verbalized it. The White girls proclaimed surprise at racist practices described in children's literature and suggested—through their comments—that racism was largely an issue from the past. Precious, no longer fitting well into her former peer group, found no good fit in any new group. Her writing represents her efforts to

use literature response as a means for gaining entree to her perceived White friends' group. Although she was academically similar to the White girls' group--even outscoring most of the White girls on an achievement test--she was not granted access to their social network.

This study took place in what should have been a response-supportive, multiculturally sensitive classroom setting. The experienced teacher valued response and was conscious of race. Her intern was one of the best I have ever observed. They tried to engage children in heterogeneously designed workgroups so children from different cultural backgrounds would come to know and value one another. With a class focus on friendship and the establishment of multi-age peer relationships, Mrs. Smith offered me what I thought would be the ideal research setting. I entered this study ready to encounter high levels of critical response from the participating students. Responses in this study, however, were not usually as deep or critical as I had hoped. My observation notes contain examples of students' first, mediated responses but do not show many instances of children stepping back and re-evaluating their first responses in light of text information or the perspectives of others. One reason I had been prepared for these kinds of responses was that I had been able to observe Mrs. Smith and her students engage in these kinds of discussions the year before I conducted my study.

However, in the year of my study, Mrs. Smith worked within two new powerful school constraints. The school dictated her time--segmenting her day such that her read-alouds were often cut short or became highly structured so she could complete them in the limited time available. She also worked within a culture of colleagues who increasingly found multi-age mysterious, and who often made assumptions about her former students based on how well they could write or participate in highly structured classroom events. Therefore, Mrs. Smith, and her

intern Mrs. Tyler, controlled read-alouds using a participant structure requiring students to remain seated, speak only when called upon, raise hands to be acknowledged, and look attentive. Using this structure, the teachers met both tasks. They were able to control student talk and thus prevent read-alouds from "running over" into time for another activity, and they were able to teach the codes for participation in traditionally-structured read-alouds. When Mrs. Smith tried two read-alouds in which she (1) allowed students to verbalize comments throughout the story and (2) did not worry about the length of time taken by the read-aloud, students exhibited deeper, critical responses to the stories, *and* the number of speaking turns acquired by African American students increased relative to "typical" read-alouds.

Discussion

The current study confirms the findings of other studies of culture and response in upper-elementary grades (e.g., Enciso, 1997; Smith, 1997). The responses children in this class exhibited were connected to their cultural backgrounds. However, I found diversity among the African American students I observed--even when the socioeconomic levels and academic achievement of children were informally controlled. Therefore, I concur with McCarthy (1998), who explains that children's subjectivities on the basis of any one of multiple characteristics and group memberships cannot account, in isolation, for the dynamic way in which these subjectivities have different influences on children in various situations. The children in this study were sometimes easily differentiated on the basis of ethnicity; whole group read-alouds were one example of that. Ethnic differences were less easily observed in the small group read-alouds, however, when I gathered exclusively African American children together to read and talk about books. In that situation, personality seemed to contribute to the children's responses (and even the likelihood of

participating at all, especially in the case of David) even more than ethnicity. Gender, too, played a role in who had access to peer groups and then, as a result, did or did not feel compelled to use written literature response as a vehicle for passing peer group gatekeepers. Finally, the student's social place in the classroom influenced response.

However, in the large-group settings of read-aloud and group-shared writing events, the patterns of response followed were predictable--too predictable to result completely from individual differences. Children of the "Marginalized Group" described in Chapter Five routinely demonstrated responses that were similar to one another's but which were not validated by the teacher (in class discussions) or White classmates (in play and other social interactions). Patterns of invalidated response, such as calling out and moving, seem to me to connect with subsequent social exclusion and reinforcement of a largely racial social hierarchy within the classroom. As I have described what I believe are the patterns of response for the Marginalized Students, particularly Precious, other educators have indicated they concur with my findings (presentations, February, 1998; October 1998).

The types of response observed were consistent with other research on young children's responses to literature (e.g., Cox, 1997; Hickman, 1979). How children participated in the read-aloud event, however, depended upon how they perceived the rules for participation in the discourse connected to the reading event. As Weinstein (1991) notes, children are under tremendous pressure in school to begin adapting their understandings to accommodate the activity structures teachers put into place. Children who do not have prior experience participating in the kinds of verbal exchanges that teachers expect find themselves rapidly trying to negotiate how and when to speak. Successful participation in the read-aloud events in the current study required students to demonstrate communicative competence (Cazden, 1988) in order

to respond appropriately and achieve the validation comments or signals from the teacher.

It may be telling that the kinds of teacher initiation Precious and her other African American cohorts (except Leon and Travis) responded least well to were effertent questions. Erickson (1982) explains that teachers' questions have two dimensions--academic and social correctness. In the case of Precious, she often knew the answers to Mrs. Smith's questions, but she did not know *how* to deliver the responses. Clearly, participation in large-group oral responses requires careful negotiation of a "complex process" (Green & Harker, 1982). The challenge is infinitely easier for children who have the background to understand the implicit rules and act accordingly.

The findings of this study illuminate some of the issues multicultural educators have been concerned about for some time. This study suggests that teachers tend to become assimilationists (Gomez & Tabachnick, 1991; Perry & Fraser, 1993; Villegas, 1991), even when their explicit goals are not easily recognized as assimilationist. Mrs. Smith used her comments with students to implicitly condition her ethnic minority students to participate using the dominant culture's norms for group discussions. Even when teachers attempt to attend to issues of race and ethnicity, they often find it hard to remain true to their philosophical commitments within the constraints of institutionally influenced daily work.

I will discuss the findings of this study from two perspectives. First, I will examine how the current study adds to the body of research grounded in social theories of response. I will also examine the findings of this study from a critical, multicultural perspective and evaluate how this study can inform both scholarly research and teachers' practices.

Social Response Theory

Response has been examined from a number of different research perspectives, but in this study, I have been concerned with response as it occurs within the interpretive community of the classroom. From this perspective, children's responses are influenced by and influence others' responses within the community. Examining response from this perspective also entails examining the larger contexts within which response occurs—including readers' individual histories, the participant structures of classrooms, and the kinds of responses that are considered socially appropriate or inappropriate (Beach, 1993). I have used a definition of response similar to that of Hickman (1981) and Guice (1995). Guice (1995) defines response broadly, as "all acts that [indicate] children connecting with books" (p.381). I have included in my own definition samples of children connecting with group-shared writing and responding to the social milieu of the classroom.

My findings support the contention that the characteristics of the reader, including a reader's ethnic background, may influence the reader's modes of response. While other researchers have embarked on related research with upper-elementary-aged, African American children (e.g., Smith, 1997; Tyson, 1997), this study is one of the first to suggest the influence of ethnic background on the response modes of young children. The kinds of responses evident in this study represent the kinds of initial responses that are often considered a lower, preliminary level of response. However, the kinds of response I found (e.g., movement, initiating readings, touching books, and verbal responses) have been noted in other response research with young children. Hickman (1983) suggests that non-verbal responses, such as some I have identified, might be "overlooked as response data since none of them included formulated statements about literature" and that those kinds of responses suggest "interaction with literature on an implicit level, in the same way that young children demonstrate their

command of language well before they are able to be explicit about their own skills" (p.9). More recent research by one of Hickman's former doctoral students (Sipe, 1998) suggests that adaptations in the context of literature discussions can encourage even young students' demonstrations of more analytical verbal responses. Those kinds of analytical responses were largely absent from the data I collected.

The context for read-alouds and group-sharing of writing also influenced the kinds of response children demonstrated in the class. Although Sipe (1998) and Guice (1995) explain that response is encouraged by teachers' allowance of student talk and by the presence of lengthy chunks of time for reading and discussion, the children in this class experienced neither of those conditions. The teacher and intern were required to rush through read-alouds and hurry group-shared writing events in order to "cover" the material in an abbreviated fashion. They made these adaptations to their practice partly in response to a number of administrative schedule changes and felt powerless to do much other than accommodate the constraints of this larger context. Mrs. Smith's sense of powerlessness over the context framing her instruction represents the professional experiences of other teachers (Copenhaver, 1996). As a result, the teaching strategies I observed followed patterns of teacher-domination of conversation--even in read-alouds and group-shared writing events--through the use of efferent questioning and high control over the distribution of validated speaking turns.

Hickman (1983) identifies the teacher as a powerful influence on children's response modes. In her study, she noted how the teacher's modeling of response modes resulted in later, "spontaneous" exhibitions of similar responses by students. She also mentions how some responses "never materialized at all, apparently for want of the teacher's legitimizing attention" (p.13). In the current study, the teachers' power to validate or invalidate response modes was implicit in the participant structure of the discussions of read-alouds and group-shared writing. When the participant structure

changed, Mrs. Smith validated response modes not recognized as response in earlier discussions; children who usually went unheard (or at least, unrecognized) added their voices to talk about books, and the depth of their comments changed, as well. The efferent stance initiated by the teachers during read-alouds and group-shared writing might have limited children's opportunities to engage in aesthetic response. Although Cox (1997) explains that young children respond more aesthetically than efferently, I did not observe that to be the case in this classroom.

This research also support's Dyson's (1993) claim that children use their literacies as a means to reach out to peers. In essence, one's literacy is tied in complex ways to one's social place within the classroom community. While the White girls used their literature-related writing as a public means of demonstrating their group solidarity, Precious responded to their writing by composing stories that portrayed her as possessing a place within that exclusive peer group. At no time did the White girls include her in their imaginative stories or invite her to join in their real-world escapades.

Although researchers suggest that young children pay little explicit attention to ethnicity and that play patterns for younger children are significantly more interracial than the patterns for older children, the children in this study did exhibit implicit awareness of ethnicity. I would suggest that while these young children did not explicitly discuss their own or others' ethnic affiliations--unless prompted to do so--the children did exhibit implicit awareness of these groupings, how one becomes a group member, and why someone might be excluded.

I also suggest that some studies indicating little relationship between ethnicity and response (e.g., Altieri, 1993, 1995) might be evaluating response and ethnicity too narrowly. Although some investigations of written response indicate little difference in the kinds of responses exhibited by members of different ethnic groups, I suspect that

other studies of response in natural settings might yield different findings. Response in the natural setting is inherently social and public. Now that I have observed the diversity of cultural values and beliefs among the population of students traditionally considered part of an African American "ethnic" group, I suspect that our racial categories do not always correspond neatly with ethnic categories. What we have generally called "ethnic" may in fact be "racial," and, if this is the case, labeling a group of students "African American," examining the responses of that group, and seeking patterns exhibited by the group as a whole may be a culturally flawed approach. Dyson (1993) comments

As human beings we seem to be driven to categorizing aspects of the world into neat boxes--the popular, the literary, the folk, the oral, and the literate--developmental lines and sociocultural boxes. But these neat boxes keep all of us, children and adults, trapped. Within such linguistic and social containers, it is hard to imagine singing scientists, literary comedians, storytelling biologists and historians, and preaching lawyers. A vision of plurality, a cultural embracing of diversity, is a gift we can only give each other. (p.230)

As I complete this study, I am rethinking the "boxes" into which I have placed the diverse children from Mrs. Smith's classroom, and I am wondering how teachers and researchers might foster not only the "permeable curricula" (p.230) Dyson advocates but also research methodologies celebrating (rather than being complicated by) diversity.

Multicultural, Critical Perspectives

Based on my findings, I would suggest that multicultural philosophy and practice have not yet met in all classrooms. While teachers express commitments to serving the needs of ethnic minority children, teachers work within a larger institution and host of educational traditions not usually supportive of multiculturally sound practices. In the months that I have been describing this study to groups of teachers, I

have continually encountered hard questions--questions I cannot answer. The most frequent of these questions is, "If not this [pattern], then what?" Teachers want to know how they can manage literature discussions with groups of up to 30 students without enforcing the participant structures used by Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Tyler. They worry that to relinquish their firm control over speaking turns is to invite chaos.

One of the basic tenets of multicultural education, however, is the equitable distribution of power between teachers and students. Greene (1988) notes that (cultural) disequilibrium stimulates learning, and a host of others remind us that our students come to school with valuable knowledge and experiences upon which schools can *build* or which schools can diagnose as *deficiencies* (e.g., Dyson, 1993; Heath, 1983; Philips, 1983). If we consider response modes to be a kind of cultural package that accompanies children to school, it is possible to see how undervaluing particular kinds of response--especially when children are young and are dependent upon those first modes of response to build deeper, more analytical and aesthetic responses as they mature--perpetuates the already-existent social inequities these children face. I would also argue that nudging children into confidently asking critical questions of literature--creating an environment that allows children to trust their own voices and questions--would encourage the development of children who wonder rather than blindly accept, resist rather than submit.

Multicultural education that is social reconstructionist (Sleeter & Grant, 1994) is built upon both a respect for diversity and a commitment to addressing issues of power. I would characterize the teachers in this study as assimilationists who would like to integrate multicultural educational philosophy into their practices but find it difficult to do so. In her appeal for an education for democracy, Edelsky (1994) suggests that even progressive literacy practices do not go far enough in fostering critique.

[M]ost of our current progressive theories and practices--such as reader response theory; sociopsycholinguistic models of reading; transactional theory in reading . . . whole language as described by me, among others, and so on--can as easily support *avoiding* looking at white privilege, for example, as they support looking *at* it. Those progressive theories and practices are correct, I believe, but they don't go far enough. They don't actively and primarily--*as a first priority*--tie language to power, tie text interpretation to societal structures, or tie reading and writing to perpetuating or resisting. (p.254, italics in original)

Critical theorists and multicultural researchers have not done enough to help practitioners make practice congruent with philosophy. Thus, the "progressive" practices of teachers can often be not only implemented in individualistic ways; they are also sometimes implemented in silencing ways.

My own journey as a researcher of multicultural issues suggests that critique and culture are complicated. I find the comments of Banks (1998) very necessary. Researchers indeed do risk inadequately portraying the cultures of groups other than their own. Even as I recorded notes about cultural issues the teachers were "missing," I was simultaneously scribbling fieldnotes with value-laden words such as "aggressive" and "temper." Attending to and respecting the cultures of other groups are not sufficient to ensure valid, compassionate description in a study. I am now moved to bring the same lens of critique back upon my own strategies as a researcher.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study represents only the beginning of more sophisticated work that could be done on ethnicity and response. I observed in only one classroom, and the demographic make-up of the student population prevented me from making the kinds of matched comparisons I would liked to have attempted. For instance, I recognize social class as a large influence on the academic opportunities of children, and the fact that racial splits and economic splits were the same complicate my study a great deal.

I must be cautious in my generalizations from this study so that I do not downplay the importance of individual differences in children or inadvertently overstate my generalizations and extend them to all African American children (Frisby, 1992). Stereotyping is a hazard of qualitative research on populations who have been traditionally known by overgeneralized characteristics. It is a particular danger for outsider researchers (Banks, 1998).

On the other hand, the findings of this study do provide some guidance for future research. For instance, in identifying some of the major differences between how African Americans and Whites responded, new research could examine these particular kinds of response more closely and explore ethnic differences between the responses of children within these larger, more general, groups. The ethnicities of White children in this study were largely ignored. In the current study, I also identify a read-aloud practice which seemed to help make the response community more inclusive, and it would be useful to follow-up on this to test the practice, finding whether it is practical to do regularly in the classroom and if it encourages the responses of children from ethnic groups that were not represented in this study.

A major follow-up of this study would be to enlist the help of classroom teachers in analyzing data from their own classrooms. While examining inequities is important, more important to ethnic minority children is the transformation of practice. This can only be accomplished, in my opinion, when teachers--the professionals engaged in this daily work and familiar with the institution of school--contribute to the development of better practices. As I conduct further studies, I personally feel the need to solicit the help of "insider" members of the cultures whose members I attempt to describe.

Implications

Teachers may not always be able to "see" ethnically linked response patterns in the midst of a hectic classroom life. Indeed, teachers tell me that they have observed, in their own classrooms, patterns similar to those I identify in this study, but they had not thought to take time to reflect on those patterns. Both of the teachers in this study were occupied at every moment of the day, but they both were attentive to (1) racial issues and (2) children's displays of literate behavior. Although the teachers spent considerable energy documenting milestones in children's reading and writing development and in orchestrating interracial work experiences for children, they did not consciously observe the ways in which invalidated responses displayed minority children's engagement with literature or how children were informally creating racially exclusive peer groups as part of their method of bonding through literature-connected writing. The findings of this study indicate that *even* teachers who are attentive to these issues might benefit from participating in practitioner research on their own students' patterns of response. It also suggests that response is inherently linked to the social community of the classroom, so attending to children's play partners and perceived friends could help the teacher make sense of students' response patterns. Finally, it means that teachers should be seeking ways to modify practices (especially read-aloud and group-shared writing time) to make the curriculum and method fit schools' current population of students--ethnically diverse, bright, and full of potential. If schooling is for the education of a critical democratic citizenship, we cannot afford to lose more children to illiteracy or disengagement with education. Children's ability "to participate in socially appropriate ways influences their opportunity to achieve academic success" (Weinstein, 1991, p.517). If so, perhaps we should rethink what is socially appropriate in schools, how to make curricula more permeable, and how to teach students to trust their voices.

APPENDIX A
BOOKS READ TO THE CLASS

Read to the Class in Researcher's Presence
or Read in Researcher's Absence But Reported by Teacher

In Chronological Order:

More Than Anything Else (Bradby)
Eating the Alphabet (Ehlert)
Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf (Ehlert)
Paddle to the Sea (Hollings)
The Gulls of the Edmund Fitzgerald (Seymour)
Night Noises (Fox)
"Fish Book"--title unknown
"Flying Fish Book"--title unknown
Night in the Barn (Gibbons)
When the Monkeys Came Back (Franklin)
Meet Daniitra Brown (Grimes)
The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything (Williams)
"A Halloween Story"--title unknown
Stellaluna (Cannon)
The Frog Who Wanted to be a Singer (Goss)
Go Away, Big Green Monster! (Emberly)
Ducky (Bunting)
The Tiny, Tiny Boy and the Big, Big Cow: A Scottish Folktale (VanLaan)
Monster Party (Jensen)
Midnight Farm (Lindbergh)
Barnyard Banter (Fleming)
Night is Coming (Nikola-Lisa)
Night in the Country (Rylant)
Thanksgiving Treat (Stock)
Goody O'Grumpity (Brink)
Farm Morning (McPhail)
In the Tall, Tall Grass (Fleming)
Seasons on the Farm (Miller)
Borreguita and the Coyote (Aardema)
Kinda Blue (Grifalconi)
'Twas the Night B'fore Christmas (Rosales)

Little House in the Big Woods (Wilder)
Latkes and Applesauce: A Hanukkah Story (Manushkin)
Night Tree (Bunting)
Lunch (Fleming)
An Amish Christmas (Ammon)
The Secret River (Rawlings)
The Real McCoy (Towle)
The Cloud Book (dePaula)
Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King (Morzollo)
Always My Dad (Wyeth)
Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree (Miller)
"Catskinella" (Hamilton)
The Story of Ruby Bridges (Coles)
The Faithful Friend (San Souci)

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENT INTERVIEWS

Opening interview statement:

This interview should help me learn a lot about your child's cultural background. I will ask you a number of questions about culture-related issues. If I ask a question you are uncomfortable answering--or decide you'd rather not answer for any reason--just let me know, and I will move on to the next question. If you decide that you would like to end the interview, you are also free to do that at any time.

Please feel free to ask about the significance of any question if you are wondering how it relates to the goals of this study. I have adapted a guideline for "framing" culture and ethnicity from Maureen Slonim.

I appreciate that you have set aside the time to help me acquire a better understanding of your child. I hope that the results of this study will help us learn how to better prepare elementary school teachers.

Protocol

Name

What does your child's name mean?

Why was this name selected for him/her?

Does it have special significance?

Country of Origin

What is your country of origin?

(If United States, then) Have you always lived in Florida?

(If other than United States) What is the most common misconception you find people have about your country?

Migration History

How long has your family lived in the United States (or Florida)?

(If applicable) Which family members came to this country (or state) first?

Residence/Neighborhood

How would you describe your neighborhood?

What are your likes/dislikes of this area?

How long have you lived in this neighborhood?

Household Composition

Who lives with your family?

Which adults have primary responsibility for the child? Who are other important caregivers?

How much contact does your child have with family members outside the household?

Language and Communication

What language is spoken in the home? By whom?

Educational Status

What's your educational background?

What kinds of schooling experiences did your child have before entering kindergarten?

What kinds of educational activities does your child have at home?

Religious Affiliation (modified)

How would you characterize your religious faith?

Parenting

Are you raising your children differently from how you were raised?

What kind of person do you want your child to be as an adult?

Role and Status of Women

How would you describe your feelings about gender roles?

Socioeconomic Status

What type of work do you do?

Language and Literacy

Do you have reading routines/rituals? Can you tell me about them?

When does your child read?

Ethnicity

How would you define your ethnicity?

Open ended:

If you were to describe your child to me--how he/she likes to play, what he/she likes to do, what would be important to know about him or her--what would you want me to know?

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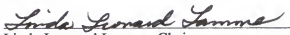
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jeane Fullmore Copenhaver, the daughter of Albert Fullmore and Carol Harder, was born and raised in Ocala, Florida. In 1989, while a student at the University of Florida, she married Ronald Copenhaver and became part of a blended family. Her fascination with her stepchildren, Kristen and Ryan, prompted her to consider a career in teaching. She completed the College of Education's undergraduate PROTEACH program in elementary and middle grades education in 1991, and graduated with a Master of Education degree in elementary education in 1992. She applied to the doctoral program in the Department of Instruction and Curriculum and began her doctoral studies in January 1993, under the advisement of Dr. Linda Lamme. She worked as a research assistant and a substitute teacher until her daughter, Alison, was born in May 1993.

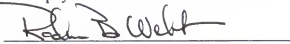
From the fall of 1993 to the spring of 1995, Jeane taught language arts and social studies to sixth-graders at Belleview Middle School. She continued her doctoral course work on a part time basis during her teaching. In August 1995, she was accepted into the Department of Bilingual Affairs' Multicultural Multilingual Fellowship program and returned to full time doctoral work. For three years, she taught preservice teacher-education courses in instruction and curriculum, instructed in the University of Florida Reading Center, and served as a research assistant.

In 1998, she was hired as an assistant professor at the Ohio State University's Mansfield campus, where she now happily teaches and researches. Her family has relocated with her. She remains interested in research addressing multicultural populations, literacy, and teacher professional development.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Linda Leonard Lamme, Chair
Professor of Instruction and Curriculum

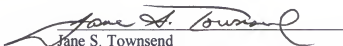
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Rodman B. Webb
Professor of Foundations of Education

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Ben F. Nelms
Professor of Instruction and Curriculum

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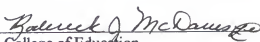

Jane S. Townsend
Assistant Professor of Instruction and Curriculum

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Danling Fu
Assistant Professor of Instruction and Curriculum

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Education and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December 1998



Dean, College of Education

Dean, Graduate School